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Investigating the Prominent Instructional Practices of Effective EFL Teachers in the Israeli Elementary School: A Multiple Case Study

Hazel Frances Sokel

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education

University of Bath

Department of Education

May 2013

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Signed on behalf of the Faculty/School of Education

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Abstract

Efforts to improve educational achievements in Israel are at the forefront of national concern. In acknowledging the crucial role of the teacher in this endeavour, this enquiry explores the prominent instructional practices of effective teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Israeli elementary schools.

The qualitative study is placed within a social constructivist perspective of learning that, in turn, serves as a foundation to the authentic pedagogical approach as determined by Newmann et al (1996). A multiple case study was conducted, whereby observations were carried out in the classrooms of five teachers recognised to be effective in their practice, and followed up with post- observation and post-data analysis interviews. The data collected from each case individually was subsequently used to engage in a cross-case analysis.

The analysis offers clear indication that all teachers provide significant opportunity for pupils to construct knowledge using a variety of techniques and strategies. There is also evidence to show –albeit to a lesser extent, that relevance in instruction, promoted primarily through the topic of the lesson and opportunities to develop intrapersonal skills, plays an important role in the practice of the effective teachers in this study. Both aspects identified are central to the notion of authenticity in instruction.

The enquiry concludes with the suggestion that the findings from this study could be used as a basis to explore the extent to which the aspects of instruction identified feature in the practice of effective teachers in a wider context, with a view to developing a national model of pedagogy that would promote much-needed and sustainable educational improvements in the Israeli context.

On a Personal Note

Working on my doctoral thesis has been the journey of a lifetime that has taken me to places I never knew existed. I have waded through the jungle of related literature, sorting out my ideas, arranging and rearranging my thoughts. In doing so, I have encountered new concepts and views that have formulated and reshaped my thinking as an educator. As a learner I have slowly but surely climbed many mountains, often struggling to reach a particular summit, be it conveying a point or completing a chapter. Having reached several such milestones along the way, I have been able to pause, take deep breaths and enjoy intermittent steps to success towards the highest personal challenge I have ever embarked upon.

I have now reached my destination and this enquiry is the outcome of my journey. As I look back at the view behind me and gasp for air, I am able to appreciate the length and breadth of my journey- both in the written product and in the personal fulfillment and development I have experienced that have helped me to become the more confident person and educator I am today.

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Abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
SER	School Effectiveness Research
TER	Teacher Effectiveness Research
DI	Direct Instruction
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
SLT	Situated Learning Theory
ELL	English language learners
L1	First language
L2	Second or foreign language
T	Teacher

Chapter 1

Introduction

This study sets out to consider how effective teachers of English as a Foreign Language in the Israeli elementary school facilitate learning. Prompted by ongoing concern for inadequate educational achievements in Israeli schools overall, the main reasons underlying the concern in this context are therefore embedded within broader perspectives. This chapter provides the background to the enquiry from relevant international and national perspectives, and identifies the central place that instructional practices play in the endeavour to enhance learning outcomes.

1.1 Setting the Scene

Lowenberg Ball and Forzani (2007:529) point out that 'Economic sustainability and quality of life depend on education.' While necessary knowledge and skills may be fostered beyond the formal educational framework, the main responsibility to suitably equip future adult members of society lies with national educational systems. As Ben-David (2007b:1) states, 'The public education system is society's primary tool forproviding basic tools that will enable future adults to make it in a modern world and in a competitive market.'

In considering the nature of the knowledge and skills needed in the current era, Hargreaves (2003:1) states definitively that 'We live in a knowledge economy, a knowledge society,' further noting that 'A knowledge economy runs not on machine power but brain power... Industrial economies needed machine workers, knowledge economies need knowledge workers' (Hargreaves 2003:18). In confirming this view, Tilak (2002:301) suggests that 'Knowledge societies require people with high levels of knowledge and new sets of skills'. Silva (2008:2), in extending this notion perceives that 'It

is an emphasis on what students can do with knowledge, rather than what units of knowledge they have, that best describes the essence of 21st century skills.'

Inherent within Silva's perception is the realisation that young people today, as the skilled and able workforce of tomorrow who 'live in a very different world from the one where we lived when we attended school' (Stoll 1999:503), must be offered opportunities to attain skills that differ from those of yesteryears. They must, in addition to acquiring knowledge, be encouraged to develop the skills needed to gainfully process that knowledge (Hargreaves 2003:18, Watkins et al 2009:18) and maximize its application in new situations. Such abilities are integral to the promotion and development of the 'intellectual capital' (Hargreaves 2003:54) considered crucial to the success of individuals and nations. Acknowledgment of the responsibility to make provision for the development of such capital has given rise to the 'global phenomenon' focusing on 'improvement of educational systems' (Sahlberg, 2011:175) by governments across the world. How educational improvement may be promoted however, is central to ongoing debate.

Fullan (2000:583) refers to the 'outside' influences of 'school districts, whole states or sets of intermediate agencies in between,' offering 'top-down' solutions for promoting and generating educational improvement'. This includes measures such as the introduction of standardised testing and a centralised curriculum. In contrast, the body of School Effectiveness Research (SER) identifies features rooted in the internal culture of schools as being key to educational improvement (Sammons et al 1995, McInerney et al 2006). Effective school leadership, collaboration within the teaching staff, and positive and productive relationships between school and home fall under this category.

The effective school as a whole must clearly be the sum of its parts, and therefore incorporate and be dependent upon, at least to some extent, the above-mentioned aspects from within the school. However, there is an additional consensus that emerges from SER: pedagogical concerns at the classroom level, and more specifically 'the quality of teaching', lie 'at the heart of effective schooling' (Sammons et al 1995:19) and, therefore, in turn, improved educational achievement. This view has been and continues to be echoed unmistakably throughout the literature (see Hopkins and Stern 1996, Carnoy 1999, Darling-Hammond 1997, 2006, Harris et al 2006, and Liston et al 2008), and is, as will be shown forthwith, central to this study.

Efforts to identify factors concerning teachers and teaching that may enhance learning outcomes have long been and continue to be at the forefront of concern for educational improvement. The extensive literature within the framework of Teacher Effectiveness Research relates to a broad spectrum of possible influencing factors, including the personal characteristics, experience and qualifications of teachers. However, the perception of Palardy and Rumberger (2008:114), whereby 'instructional practices are conceptualized as having the most proximal association with student learning' is particularly prominent.

Despite the recognition afforded to the importance of instructional practices in promoting educational improvement, there is much discussion as to the nature of those practices. As Gamoran (2011:1) highlights, 'The research is equivocal as to what effective teachers do that makes them more successful than others.' This observation is central to this enquiry. In the attempt to identify context specific insight into practice that is likely to facilitate learning and thus promote the much-needed improvement of educational achievements of English as a Foreign Language (herewith also referred to as

EFL) in Israel, this study examines the instructional practices of effective English teachers in Israeli elementary schools.

1.2 The Context

The Israeli educational system is highly centralised. Although the country is divided into six regions primarily for administrative purposes, each headed by a Regional Manager, the central office of the Ministry of Education, based in Jerusalem, assumes responsibility for crucial pedagogical aspects in all state schools across the country. This includes: determining the components of the core curriculum at all levels, curriculum development, standardized tests and allocation of a specified number of teaching hours for core subjects. English is a key element of the core curriculum in Israeli schools.

1.2.1 English in the Israeli School System

English in today's global world is recognised to be the main language of international communication. As such a comprehensive knowledge of English is considered key to the economic prosperity of individuals and nations worldwide. Israel is no exception. In order to gain entrance to degree programmes in tertiary education, a complete Bagrut (the Israeli matriculation certificate) is required, of which English at a specified level is an essential component. Thus knowledge of English serves to promote upward mobility and may be considered as a 'positional good' (Hirsch 1977, cited by Halsey et al 1999:9) for both the individual within Israeli society and for the nation as a whole on the global economic arena.

While there has been an influx of private frameworks for learning English in Israel in past years, responsibility for ensuring that all young people are offered the appropriate opportunity to attain the required level of English clearly lies with the formal education system. In acknowledging this responsibility, English is a compulsory component of the Israeli core

curriculum from Grades 4 to 12 (ages 10 to 18), with a minimum of four weekly teaching hours allotted to each class for this purpose. The national standards-based English Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2001), focusing on four domains of language learning, provides the framework for instruction at all levels. Course books reflecting the national English Curriculum, produced by local, private companies, must be assessed and approved by the Ministry of Education for use in schools.

Despite the importance attached to the learning of English in the Israeli school system, levels of achievement in English are considered inadequate. Such concern is not however, solely related to English, but extends into the realms of the additional core subjects in the Israeli school system- namely Mathematics, Science and First Language (Hebrew or Arabic).

1.2.2 Concern for Educational Achievement in Israel

During several decades following the foundation of the State in 1948, the Israeli school system was regarded to have fared successfully. However concern for educational achievement in general has risen to the forefront of public awareness in more recent times. This phenomenon may be largely attributed to the attention given worldwide to the publicised results of internationally administered tests, including and particularly the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) taken by 15 year-old pupils.

Although the PISA tests focus on the core subjects of Mathematics, Science and Reading in the first language, they are not, 'unlike school examinations ...tied to specific national curricula. Instead...students ...are asked to apply knowledge acquired in school situations to situations they might encounter in the real world, such as planning a route...taking information from a chart...'(Keeley 2007:64). The test scores therefore indicate 'how far

students near the end of compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society' (OECD, 2010:18). There is inevitable comparison of educational systems worldwide, whereby much pride and prestige is attached to high levels of achievement on international tests. However, while the latest results showed improvement, Israeli pupils have fared consistently poorly on such tests in recent years, with achievements in Reading, Mathematics and Science invariably below the OECD average. (Ben-David, 2010:329)

In addition to international tests, national standardized tests known as the 'Meitzav' (a Hebrew acronym for 'School Growth and Efficiency Measures') are administered annually in Israeli elementary and junior high schools in Mathematics, Science, First Language (Hebrew or Arabic) and English. As with the international tests, results of the Meitzav tests point to overall unsatisfactory levels of achievement (Zelikovich 2007, Ziri 2012).

There is some debate regarding the extent to which test results alone can or should determine educational success. Gorard (2001:294), for example, implies that relying on test scores as the primary means to determine the effectiveness of an entire education system may not be wholly dependable or indeed advisable, as other variables can and should be taken into consideration. Nonetheless, test scores continue to be 'widely recognised as important indicators of achievement by educators, policymakers, and the public' (Rockoff 2004:251). As such, standardized testing remains one, if not *the* principal way of measuring learner achievements in both international and local contexts.

The poor test scores referred to above are recognised to reflect a sharp decline in levels of achievement and, indeed, the quality of education overall, in Israel in more recent years (Ben-David 2006, 2008). The impression

generated by continued low scores on both international and national tests that the Israeli educational system is failing to adequately provide for the current and future needs of society cannot, therefore, be denied. This perception may be summed up by the poignant revelation of leading Israeli economist Ben-David (2010:328) who states that 'Israel's current education picture is quite sobering.'

This situation has provoked tension at both local and national levels. In efforts to regain public confidence in the Israeli education system as a whole, a range of measures to improve educational attainment have been introduced in recent years.

1.2.3 Towards Educational Improvement in Israel

Reform initiatives in the Israeli education system in the past decade reflect both the external and internal aspects that promote educational improvement referred to earlier. As examples of the former, national reform programmes have been and are currently being introduced at elementary, junior high and high school levels. These include the provision of additional teaching hours for the benefit of underachieving and/or 'high flying' pupils, and compulsory, continued professional development courses for practicing teachers. In the past two years significant investment by the Ministry of Education and local municipalities has been made in equipping schools with technological equipment, and providing teachers of core curriculum subjects with intense in-service training to support the integration of technologies into their teaching. Procedures using a generic standardised rubric for School Principals to assess teacher performance, contribution and commitment – both within the school as a whole and inside the classroom, have been introduced.

Somewhat extensive curricula related changes have taken place in Israel since the turn of the 21st century. Standards-based curricula and modular matriculation examinations have been introduced in several subject areas – including English. Increasing attention is being given to the need for the acquisition of higher order thinking skills. In English, for example, a programme focusing on the development of such skills through the teaching of literature has recently been incorporated into both the high school curriculum and the national 'Bagrut' matriculation examination. The national English curriculum is currently undergoing extensive review. This includes the compilation of lists of specified lexical items and grammatical structures to be added to the basic curriculum.

At local levels, be it the municipality or the individual school, varied aspects of school improvement programmes have been underway in recent years – particularly in the peripheral areas of the country. These include efforts to renew physical dimensions of schools – buildings, facilities and equipment, and the implementation of a myriad of intervention programmes aimed at raising achievements in core subjects in all grade levels. In addition to public funding, funds for such projects have, in some instances, also been provided by philanthropists from around the world. Furthermore, factors relating to internal aspects of the school also feature in efforts to enhance learning outcomes in recent years. School Principals, under the guidance of the General Inspectorate, increasingly work towards establishing a culture of team work between teachers within the school, and encouraging parental contribution to the school community.

While the contribution of all of the above-mentioned reform measures from both within and beyond the school setting must be acknowledged, the nature of instructional practices, identified earlier as a key facet of school-based influences likely to improve educational outcomes, has not yet been

adequately emphasised in the Israeli context. Thus, in light of the perceptions highlighted above, this study sets out to consider the research question: 'How do effective teachers of English in the Israeli (Jewish sector) elementary school facilitate learning?' In order to gain potentially informative and useful insight into this issue, it was pertinent to both identify the key instructional practices of effective teachers and examine the underlying rationale for engaging in those practices. To this end, a multiple case study was conducted in the classrooms of five teachers of EFL considered effective in their practice, and is presented in this paper.

Wragg et al (1996:11) make the still relevant perception that the concept of effective in relation to teachers and teaching is open to interpretation. This notion is highlighted by Ableser (2012:66), who states that attempts to define the concept of effective in this context are 'fraught with challenges.' With this premise in mind, it is pertinent to clarify that the five EFL teachers at the focus of this study are considered effective for two main reasons. Firstly their practice has gained favourable reputation from relevant professionals - particularly English Inspectors and School Principals, who engage in the placement and/or assessment and evaluation of the performance of English teachers. Secondly the practice of all five teachers has rendered consistently higher than national average pupil achievement scores on national English tests.

1.3 Outline of the Study

The study is presented in six chapters. Following this introduction that provides both the rationale and the context for the study, Chapter 2 addresses the key theoretical aspects upon which the study is founded. An historical overview of Teacher Effectiveness Research and its theoretical underpinnings from both the learning and teaching perspectives are presented. A social constructivist approach is identified as being of particular

significance in fostering an effective learning experience, and shown to underlie the notion of authenticity in instruction as a key contributing factor to effective teaching practice. Models of instruction that stem from the work of Newmann et al (1996) founded upon the concept of authenticity and serve to inform the subsequent stages of the enquiry, are highlighted.

The following three chapters focus on the study itself. Chapter 3 presents the multiple case study conducted to examine the instructional practices and identify those that feature most prominently in the classrooms of the five effective teachers at the focus of this study. The rationale for and description of case study methodology founded in a qualitative perspective as used in this study are presented, together with a detailed explanation of how the data were collected through observations and interviews. This chapter also details how credibility was maintained throughout the study and how the data collected were analysed. Chapter 4 presents the findings from each case in turn. Examples of incidences that occurred during classroom observations, and insights related by the teachers during interviews are detailed to illustrate key aspects of the practice of each teacher. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings, highlighting the main conclusions drawn as a result of a cross-case analysis of the data collected from all five teachers. In doing so, the facilitation of knowledge construction and relevance in learning are highlighted as prominent aspects of practice in this context, with the former being of particular significance.

The final chapter entitled 'Looking Back and Looking Ahead' reflects on the process encountered, highlighting key strengths and weaknesses of the study. Implications from the conclusions drawn that serve the professional responsibilities of this researcher are presented. The potential value of the conclusions from this study to the broader community of educators in Israel is also considered.

It is suggested that developing and implementing a context-specific model of pedagogy incorporating the prominent practices identified and rooted in the concept of authenticity in instruction, would contribute to the enhancement of learning outcomes in English and other subjects in Israeli schools. While the outcomes of a study of this limited scale do not provide sufficient evidence upon which to promote the development of such a model, it is suggested that the insights discussed in Chapter 4 could serve as a basis upon which to promote further investigation into facilitating learning that would enhance educational achievement in Israeli schools.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Perspectives

2.1 Introduction

Studies into effective teachers and teaching practices have a long history, as illustrated by the earliest recorded study on this topic by Kratz in 1896. Moreover, the volume of literature on the subject is vast (Seidel and Shalvelson 2007). The extent to which the topic continues to be discussed in the literature may be considered testimony to the observation that 'it has been ...difficult to establish robust links between teaching and learning' (Hiebert and Grouws 2007:371). Nonetheless, as shown forthwith, considerable progress in attempting to identify effective teachers and what constitutes effective teaching has been made in the past decades. Hence the emergence and ongoing development of the body of knowledge known as Teacher Effectiveness Research - herewith also referred to as TER.

This chapter will examine the contribution made by findings from TER towards furthering an appreciation and understanding of effective teaching and teachers. An overview of key relevant studies and conclusions drawn from three principal paradigms that fall under the umbrella of TER, namely presage-product, process-product and the more recent interpretive research paradigm, will be provided. In doing so, relevant insights from prominent theories of learning, with particular emphasis on a social constructivist approach, are offered, thereby illustrating the inevitably intertwined nature of teaching and learning processes.

In recognition of the need for more context-specific insight into instructional practices that promote learning, an examination of studies in contexts bearing relevance to this study is offered, revealing that pupil engagement is a key contributing factor to learning. This leads, in turn, to the revelation that

authentic pedagogical practice, as identified initially by Newmann et al (1996) and rooted in a social constructivist perspective, is recognised to contribute to the enhancement of learning outcomes. Before embarking on this discussion however, it is pertinent to clarify two points.

Firstly, while the heading 'Teacher Effectiveness Research' bears direct reference to the effects of teachers only, studies on the impact of teaching practices on learning are also integral to this body of research. Secondly, it is important to acknowledge that varied terminology, including good, successful, quality and effective, is commonly encountered in reference to both teachers and teaching practices in the TER literature. While, as pointed out by Kyriacou (2009:11) each term conveys a different meaning, a detailed examination to highlight the differences between them is beyond the scope of this discussion. Furthermore the terms may be perceived as being used interchangeably in some cases. Thus, for the purpose of the ensuing discussion, the various terms may be used to convey the same general meaning, whereby the research focuses on identifying aspects relating to teachers and teaching that are most likely to contribute to the enhancement of learning outcomes.

2.2 Presage-Product Research

Early studies into effective teachers and teaching tended 'to be descriptive rather than analytical,' (Turner-Bisset 2001:4), largely characterized by two main aspects. Firstly, they focused primarily on the personality traits and characteristics of the teacher (Medley 1972, Brophy and Good 1986, Harris 1998, Turner-Bisset 2001). Kratz (1896) revealed that characteristics such as 'helpful' and 'kind' were important considerations in identifying the best teacher, while an investigation by Newmark (1929) highlighted characteristics such as 'skillful' and 'impartial'.

Secondly such studies were highly subjective, based on the opinions of individuals. Initially, the views of pupils were recorded (such as in the aforementioned study by Kratz 1896), and later those of professionals or experts in the field were also taken into consideration (Newmark 1929, Medley 1972, Brophy and Good 1986, Turner-Bisset 2001). As such, 'an ideal teacher met subjective standards of excellence determined by selected, significant others' (Cruickshank and Haefele 2001:26).

However, as Medley (1972:433) noted, the usefulness of such studies, whereby 'Everything in them is a matter of opinion,' was limited in that 'none ... included any measure of teacher effects on pupils.' In due course the need to examine the extent to which teaching practices employed were effective in relation to student learning outcomes became increasingly apparent. As fittingly pointed out by Rosenshine and Berliner (1978:4), 'Although it still matters whether a teacher is critical, or indirect, or enthusiastic, it is much more relevant to the issue of student achievement to know if the students have been engaged in mastering academic skills and what kind of progress they are making towards the mastery of these skills.' Hence, as 'educationists attempted to move instructional skills from a largely intuitive craft practice on to a more scientific basis' (Campbell et al 2003:347), the focus of research into effective teachers and teaching '...shifted from teachers' personal traits to their teaching behaviours' (Brophy 1986:1069). This phenomenon gave rise to the process-product paradigm of teacher effectiveness research, identified by Medley (1972:437) as '....a new branch of science...a science of effective teacher behaviour.'

2.3 Process-Product Research

Anderson et al (1979:193) define process-product research as the 'tradition of research (that)... attempts to define relationships between what teachers do in the classroom (the process of teaching) and what happens to their

students (the products of learning).' Harris (1998:171) notes that 'This approach sought teacher behaviours that predicted or preferably caused growth in student knowledge and skills,' whereby indication of the extent of such growth is gleaned 'primarily (from) scores on pretest and posttest achievement measures' (Doyle 1977:167). Thus the process-product paradigm served to measure the direct effects of teaching on learning outcomes, using specified instructional practices. However, assumed to be as a result of what were, in retrospect, weaknesses in research design and data analysis (Medley 1979 in Brophy 1989:xii), the earlier process-product research endeavours failed to identify clear links between teacher behaviours and student achievements (Brophy, 1986:1069). Consequently, researchers became discouraged (Medley 1972:435) and few further observational studies into effective teaching were conducted in the ensuing decades (Medley 1972:436).

As research methods improved however, (Brophy and Good 1986), the 1970s - since dubbed the 'heyday of process-product research on teaching' (Shalveson et al 1986:51), witnessed a renewed interest in efforts to determine correlations between specific teacher behaviours and student achievements. During this period there was a marked increase in process-product research studies into effective teaching as 'several groups of investigators began work designed to identify reliable relationships between teacher behaviour and student outcomes' (Brophy 1989:xiii).

An examination of frequently cited process-product studies of this era for the purpose of this study, (for example Brophy and Evertson 1974, Stallings 1976, Good and Grouws, 1977, 1979, Anderson et al 1979 and Evertson et al 1980), confirmed the observation of Shalveson et al (1986:51), that process-product research 'tended to follow a common general paradigm,' whereby data relating to specific instructional practices of primary school teachers of

basic skills were collected from a large number of classrooms in the USA and the UK. Thus, as confirmed by Anderson et al (1979:193), 'many (process-product) studies have focused on defining what teachers do that contributes to their students' learning of reading, mathematics and language' in limited contexts, whereby English is the first language.

While there was 'some diversity in emphasis among investigators' (Doyle 1977:165), together with variation in both the nature of the instructional practices examined and the extent to which conclusive evidence of the correlation between specific practices and student achievement may be drawn from process-product research, there is convincing indication from the body of process-product research that some practices and procedures were regarded as pivotal to effective teaching and learning at that time. These concern instructional time and active instruction.

2.3.1 Instructional Time

Berliner (1990:3) points out that 'Some scientists and educational scholars find the concept of instructional time to be...commonsensical and of such obvious importance'. Nonetheless, research indicates that the time allotted to instruction varies between classrooms (Karweit 1984:34). As such, 'Much attention has been given... to the use of time in school' (Karweit 1984:33), and the notion that time is a significant determinant of learning (Gettinger and Seibert 2002:1) is a commonly recurring theme throughout the process-product research literature. The literature reveals variation in the terminology used in discussing the notion of time in relation to teaching and learning. However, Berliner's (1990:4) view of instructional time as a 'superordinate concept', serving as an umbrella term for issues relating to classroom time devoted to teaching and learning, within which the further concepts of quantity and quality of time are encompassed, provides a useful framework for the ensuing discussion.

The concept of quantity of time is a recurring theme in the process-product research literature, often in reference to opportunity to learn. Bennett (1987:77) states that 'The broadest definition of opportunity to learn is...the extent to which (pupils are) exposed to schooling.' Berliner (1990:4) confirms this perception in stating that allocated time, as an alternative term for opportunity to learn, is 'usually defined as the time that the state, district, school or teacher provides...for instruction.' Although there can be no guarantee, the assumption is that the more time allocated to the teaching of, and, thus, opportunity to learn, a specific subject- in terms of length of lessons, the number of lessons per week and the number of weeks in the school year, the more subject matter will be covered by the teacher and the more learning will take place.

A second key facet of the notion of instructional time considers the quality of that time. Karweit (1984:33) correctly points out that having the time available for learning is not enough in itself, in stating that 'Time is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for learning. Learning takes time, but providing time does not in itself ensure that learning will take place.' Hence, while there is largely uncontested evidence that that the more time afforded to the teaching of a subject, the higher the levels of achievement are likely to be, the quality of instructional time is crucial to this end.

Process-product research identifies the concept of Academic Learning Time (ALT), also referred to as 'academic engaged time' (Rosenshine and Berliner 1978:6), as being the 'part of allocated time ...in which a student is engaged successfully in the activities or with the materials to which he or she is exposed, and in which those activities and materials are related to educational outcomes that are valued' (Berliner 1990:5). ALT is, in turn, recognised to serve a central role in the endeavour to maximize the quality of instructional time. Inherent in this perception is the confirmation that it is not

only the amount of time dedicated to the actual learning of subject matter from the overall time allocated for learning (as opposed to the time for organisational classroom issues such as registering attendance or transitions between activities) that is important. How, and the extent to which, the time assigned to academic activity is used to gainfully support learning is clearly of significance in promoting effective learning. Within the overall framework of the notion of ALT, process-product research identifies the practice of 'active instruction' as significantly contributing to improved academic achievements.

2.3.2 Active Instruction

Brophy (1986:1069) determines that evidence from process-product research shows that 'The most consistently replicated findings link students' achievement to the degree to which teachers carry the content to themthrough active instruction....,' in which 'students.... spend most of their time being taught or supervised by their teachers rather than working on their own or not working at all' (Brophy 1986:1070). Effective active instruction, whereby the teacher plays an active and, indeed, central role in the educational setting, was recognised to take place at two principal levels of classroom interaction during this period.

The first level is that of 'whole class instruction' (Good and Grouws 1977:53), in which the teacher engages in class presentations that demonstrate 'the process or concept under study' and 'how to do assigned work' (Good 1979:55). Active instruction is also practiced when teachers move around the classroom and interact with pupils during seatwork (Rosenshine 1983:346) as they 'are proceeding through a fairly common series of linear tasks' (Rosenshine and Berliner 1978:11) provided by the teacher. In both instances, the teacher ensures the orderly provision and execution of academic activity considered fundamental to improved levels of achievement.

This section has highlighted the principal conclusions drawn from process-product research studies that aimed to determine what constituted effective teaching practice during the relevant period. Both the quantity and quality of teaching time have been shown to be significant. The quality of that time is largely determined by the nature of the teacher's actions in accordance with the notion of active instruction. In contrast to later views on what constitutes effective instructional practice- including insights from this study, reference to the pupil's role in the learning process during the period in which process-product research was conducted is notable by its absence. This perspective will be highlighted further in due course. Before doing so however, it is pertinent to relate to the prominent 'instructional approach' (Reigeluth and Keller 2009) at that time - Direct Instruction, for which the main conclusions drawn from process-product research, as highlighted above, serve as a foundation.

2.4 Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction (DI) is described as 'a form of explicit, stepwise instruction, emphasising student learning and cognitive achievement' (Creemers 1994:65). While there are variations to this model of instruction (Huitt et al, 2009:76), a general model of DI is recognised to incorporate some specific features.

Rosenshine (1976:64) notes that in classrooms employing DI, '...learning is approached in a direct business-like manner,' whereby 'the teacher is the dominant leader,' who exercises 'a high degree of...direction and control' (Joyce and Weil 1996:344). Lessons are conducted in a 'structured, academically oriented learning environment, ' (Joyce and Weil 1996:344), with a focus on 'activities and settings (that) move students through a sequenced set ... (of) materials or tasks (...similar to tasks on achievement tests)' (Rosenshine and Berliner 1978:7), that are selected and directed by

the teacher (Joyce and Weil 1996:344). As such, DI, as a model of teaching, focuses primarily on the development and delivery of 'basic skills and basic cognitive knowledge' (Creemers 1994:86).

Vermunt and Verloop (1999:265) state that 'learning and teaching activities are one another's mirror image.' In confirming this perception, Nuthall and Alton-Lee (1990:553) note that 'Learning is ...the process through which teaching works. Failing to take into account the essential characteristics of learning makes it very difficult to interpret or make sense of teaching research.' Thus, while the focus of this enquiry concerns effective teaching practices, in reviewing the relevant literature it became increasingly clear that such an examination cannot be divorced from an understanding of what constitutes effective learning. This perception is clearly illustrated by Joyce and Weil (1996:343), who aptly point out that that DI, as a model of teaching founded upon findings from studies into teacher effectiveness, owes its theoretical origins to the behaviourist view of learning. Based on this premise, it is therefore pertinent to acknowledge thoughts on the theory of learning prominent at that time, which formed the basis of the Reception Model of Learning, and, in essence, underpinned DI as a model of teaching.

2.5 The Reception Model of Learning

The Reception Model of Learning, also referred to as the Transmission Model, rests on behaviourist theories of learning that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century as a result of work by prominent behavioural psychologists, such as Skinner, at that time. This model of learning, as implied by the terminology used, identifies the learner as a 'passive recipient of knowledge' (Carnell and Lodge 2003:11) and equates learning with 'being taught' (Watkins et al 2009:34). Bodner (1986:876) presents an interesting analogy of the teaching/learning process in accordance with this model, in which the mind is viewed as 'a black box ' whereby 'we can accurately judge what goes

in (stimulus) and what comes out (response).’ Learners therefore engage in the shallow processing of knowledge transmitted by the teacher, only to be later reproduced – primarily on tests. The need to address additional aspects, including those of a social nature, relating to and (now) known to be integral to effective learning are, for the most part, ignored in this model of learning (Carnell and Lodge 2003:11).

The perception of how effective learning occurs as expressed in the Reception Model was compatible with, and, indeed, served as the foundation for the process-product research studies, which were, as Shulman (1986a:11) noted, ‘...consistent with a strong existing research tradition- applied behavioristic psychology...’ However, in due course, the value of conclusions drawn from process-product studies was called into question by professionals in the field.

2.6 Questioning Process-Product Research

The ‘conceptions of effective teaching (as determined by process-product research) were innovative for their time in that they were based on experimentation, demonstration and observation’ (Campbell et al, 2003:348), that had not been undertaken to such a degree in the past. The contribution of the findings from process-product research in furthering the understanding of what constitutes effective teaching was considered substantial, thus deeming this period of educational research successful in its endeavour (Brophy and Good 1986:370). However, the intensive pace at which process-product research offered insight into effective teaching and its practical implementation created, in turn, a need for the relevant communities to internalize the findings and their bearing on the field in the ensuing years. This led to a ‘natural period of consolidation following a rapid period of development of new findings...’ (Brophy and Good 1986:370). As such, there

was far less advancement in the field of TER in the decade that followed - from the mid-70s to mid- 80s.

Despite the recognition of the contribution of process-product research to the field of teaching, it was largely during this same period that a sense of dissatisfaction with process-product research began to surface among professionals in the field, and as Shulman (1986b:6) notes, process-product research was subsequently 'criticized from several perspectives.' While there may be additional reasons underlying this phenomenon, the concerns may be largely attributed to two significant developments in the fields of learning and teaching during the relevant period. The first is the emergence and increasing acceptance of constructivist learning theories that offered sharp contrast to the aforementioned behaviouristic view of learning. The second important development concerns the increasing need for the codification of a professional knowledge base for teachers. How each of these developments is perceived to have contributed to the doubts voiced as to the value of process-product research is discussed below.

2.7 Constructivist Learning Theories

Constructivism is described by Cholewinski (2009:284) as 'a theory that aims to explain what knowledge is, and how it is acquired,' that 'develop(ed) as a powerful challenge' to the behaviourist perspective, thereby leading to a significant 'paradigm shift in educational design and practices away from 'traditional' methods' (Cholewinski 2009:283). While different interpretations and versions of constructivism have emerged, the essence of the constructivist perspective of learning may, as Bodner (1986:876) succinctly states, 'be summarized in a single statement: *Knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner.*'

Knowledge construction can be seen as a process that takes place along a continuum. Initially, learners are exposed to new information through varying experiences and situations that in the formal learning environment might be achieved through focused instruction. The new information is linked by the learner to his/her existing knowledge acquired through prior instruction and experiences. Doing so 'help(s) ... (learners) to make sense of ... new material' (King 1994:339), by forming new associations and altering those that existed previously within their knowledge networks or structures, as determined by King (1994:339).

This perception of the way in which knowledge is acquired serves as the central tenet of the different aspects of constructivist learning theory. The most prominent theories from which constructivist models of learning have derived include those of psychologists Piaget and Vygotsky. Piaget's work focused on the cognitive construction of knowledge in accordance with the individual's developmental processes, whereas Vygotsky placed emphasis on the construction of knowledge through social interaction.

2.7.1 The Cognitive Construction of Knowledge

In the mid-twentieth century, Piaget rejected the contention that learning takes place in response to an external stimulus as purported by behaviourist learning theories, in favour of the recognition that all children have the innate capacity to learn in accordance with their stage of cognitive development at any given time. As such, Piaget emphasised the 'biological maturity as an inevitable condition for learning' (Blanc 1990:50). In reference to Piaget's claims, Cholewinski (2009:287) points out that 'Knowledge is seen as something that individuals actively construct through a series of intellectual stages or steps ...based on their existing cognitive structures rather than as something passively absorbed.' According to Piaget's viewpoint therefore, individuals engage in acquiring and constructing new knowledge from the

world around them at a developmentally appropriate level. Based on this premise, in the classroom context the learner is thus placed 'at the source of his or her own learning with the teacher merely acting as a provider of experiences and a guide to the reasoning process' (Bullock and Wikeley, 2004:64). The social constructivist approach offers an alternative perspective as to how learning occurs.

2.7.2 Social Constructivist Theory

Social constructivist learning theory, also known as sociocultural theory, is rooted in the work of the Russian theorist Lev Vygotsky. Although Vygotsky's ideas and perceptions were developed in the 1920s and 1930s, his 'rich, multi-faceted theory' (John-Steiner and Mahn 1996:191) only rose to the forefront of discussion about learning and teaching in the latter part of the 20th century, in part at least, as a result of political change in the region.

Vygotsky is recognised to have challenged the cognitive constructivist approach with the contention that 'the developmental process (is) towed by the learning process' (Blanck 1990:50), whereby the learning process encountered by the child '(leads)... development rather than follow(s) it' (Bodrova 1997:20). Such processes are recognised to benefit from and depend largely on 'social practices' that are identified by Lave and Wenger (1996:147) as 'the fundamental form of learning.' As Ruesser (2001:2058) concisely points out, 'People construct their knowledge not only from direct personal experience, but also by being told by others and by being shaped through social experiences and interaction' embedded in the cultural surroundings in which the activity takes place. It is this logical perception that forms the basis for the key ideas and concepts that stem from Vygotsky's work.

Daniels (2001:32) aptly notes that the 'concepts developed by Vygotsky sometimes appear as a web of highly related notions.' The next section of

this discussion will attempt to untangle the web by presenting those concepts of particular relevance to this discussion separately, while showing the interrelatedness and interdependence between them. These are: mediation through language as a tool for learning and the Zone of Proximal Development.

Mediation through Language as a Tool for Cognitive Development

In considering how human cognitive development takes place, Vygotsky (1978) makes reference to higher mental functions that are specific to humans (Karpov and Haywood 1998:27), such as 'logical memory,...reasoning, analysis, and ... problem solving' (Donato and MacCormick, 1994:456). These contrast to the more 'elementary functions, such as sensing, with which we are born' (Cholewinski 2009:289), that are also present in other animal species. The acquisition of higher mental functions that enable human beings to construct meaning from the world around necessitates, according to Vygotskian thought, the transformation of knowledge and/or skills external to the individual to become internalized.

The successful process of internalization 'does not happen independently or automatically' but rather 'takes prolonged and sustained participation in social activities that have a clear purpose' (Johnson and Golombek 2011:4) and are therefore 'generated in goal-directed...activity' (Donato and MacCormick 1994:456). As such social interaction that takes place within 'specific social contexts' (Johnson and Golombek 2011:4) leads to the situation whereby 'The interpersonal becomes intrapersonal.' (Daniels 2001:39). This occurs, according to Vygotskian thought, in a process of mediation between the parties involved, whereby 'socially-mediated mental processing evolves (subsequently) into self-mediated processing' (Lantolf 1994:419).

Lantolf (1994:418) defines mediation as 'the introduction of an auxiliary device into an activity that then links humans to the world of objects or to the world of mental behavior.' Such auxiliary devices or tools, provided by the culture in which they are used for the support, extension and reorganization of mental functioning (Pea and Brown 1991:11) may be categorised under two main headings. The first is that of artifacts or 'technical tools' (Anton 1999:304), such as the textbook or visual materials as often used in the language classroom (Donato and MacCormick, 1994:456). The second category relates to the psychological tools of signs and symbols.

John-Steiner and Mahn (1996:193) note that 'psychological tools are not invented by the individual in isolation. They are products of socio-cultural evolution to which individuals have access by being actively engaged in the practices of their communities.' Hence, such tools, as referred to by Vygotsky (1978:54), are developed from and with the cultural bias of the community in which they are used and 'are what might be termed the 'carriers' of sociocultural patterns and knowledge' (Wertsch 1994:204). The tool of language – particularly spoken language, is recognised by such as Anton (1999:304) to be 'the most powerful ' example.

Inherent in Vygotskian theory therefore, is the notion that it is largely through the use of language as a tool that is both 'social in origin' (Moll 1990:12) and formulated through specific cultural context, that mediation of thoughts, ideas and information, and the subsequent construction of knowledge by the individual is made possible. Put simply, Vygotsky was 'concerned to show how the social activity of speaking was connected with the active processes of thinking' (Daniels 2001:50). The notion of mediation through the tool of language may be seen, in turn, as the axis from which the conceptualisation of the Zone of Proximal Development emerged.

The Zone of Proximal Development

The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development is considered central to Vygotskian thinking on learning, development and pedagogy, as suggested by Blanck (1990:50), Bodrova (1997:20) and Daniels (2001:59). In recognizing that 'each person has an individual range for potential cognitive development' (Cholewinski 2009:290), Vygotsky (1978:86) identifies 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or collaboration with more capable peers' as the Zone of Proximal Development (herewith also referred to as ZPD).

Lave and Wenger (1991:48) note that the concept of ZPD has been open to 'vastly differing interpretations.' Such differences are inevitable as different scholars investigate and reinvestigate the concept, but may also be due, in part at least, to the fact that in the process of translation of Vygotsky's work from its original Russian, interpretations may vary, as highlighted by Daniels (2001:2). Nonetheless, Chaiklin (2003:41), while acknowledging possible misconceptions and questions arising from the above commonly cited translation of the definition, states that 'the common conception of the zone of proximal development presupposes an interaction on a task between a more competent ... and a less competent person, such that the less competent person becomes independently proficient at what was initially a jointly accomplished task.' Lantolf (1994:419) concisely defines the ZPD as 'an interpersonal configuration which brings into contact the individual's past learning and future development.'

In recognizing this perspective, it is possible to conclude that the notion of the ZPD, as seated within the more holistic perspective of Vygostkian thought, concerns the guidance of a learner by the mediation of a more capable other as referred to above, through the use of different tools and

language in particular, until the point of internalization of knowledge is reached – that is through the learner's individual ZPD.

This section has presented key aspects of the Vygotskian concept of social constructivism that provides a sound framework for an understanding of how learning takes place. The notion of knowledge construction through social interaction, in accordance with Vygotsky's perceptions, forms the basis for Newmann et al's (1996) three-tier instructional model of Authentic Pedagogy. Newmann et al's (1996) perspective subsequently informed the data collection and analysis in this study, aspects of which, as shown in due course, proved to be prominent in the practice of the teachers in this study.

Since the ideas of Vygotsky discussed above first came to light, researchers have developed his key concepts to form the bases for several sociocultural theories of learning (Harley 1996:116). Situated Learning Theory is a prominent example that underpins relevance as a further aspect of authenticity in instruction that also emerges in the study at the focus of this discussion.

2.7.3 Situated Learning Theory

Clancey (1995:49) notes that 'Situated learning is concerned with how learning occurs every day....' as an 'inevitably but unfinished continuous process that goes on throughout life' (Brown and Duguid 1996:49). While there are 'multiple perspectives concerning situated learning' (McLellan 1996:5) two central tenets of Situated Learning Theory (herewith also referred to as SLT) concerning the situated nature of learning and the formation and operation of Communities of Practice are discussed below. This is followed by a consideration of SLT in the formal educational context.

The Situated Nature of Learning

In reference to the observations of prominent situated learning theorists (including Lave and Wenger 1991), Anderson et al (1996:5) note that 'Situated learning... emphasizes the idea that much of what is learned is specific to the situation in which it is learned.' Learning may thus be recognised to occur within the everyday practices and occurrences of the culture in question, thereby confirming the observation that 'meaningful learning will only take place if it is embedded in the social and physical context within which it will be used' (Herrington and Oliver 1995:2), as purported by Brown et al (1989). Learning, according to Brown et al (1989:33), therefore involves the process of enculturation.

Brown et al (1989:34) determine that by experiencing the opportunity to observe and practice the behaviour and codes of a culture 'in situ' people are likely to act accordingly, thereby successfully adopting the norms of that culture. Becoming enculturated – that is learning and adopting the norms of the host culture, is thus likely to be an ongoing process. Such a process may be conscious or unconscious, and involve such as learning to speak and becoming literate in the language of, and undertaking roles within and specific to, a given culture. To do so invariably necessitates the participation in a Community of Practice.

Communities of Practice

The notion of 'Communities of Practice' was first highlighted by Lave and Wenger (1991) in relation to the concept of Legitimate Peripheral Participation and has since been discussed in the literature in further detail, for example by Wenger (1998). Wenger (1998:2) identifies the fact that Communities of Practice 'are everywhere' and develop as a result of commonly shared interests of importance to its members. He notes that Communities of Practice are characterised by three main aspects: a joint

enterprise that undergoes constant negotiation by its members, the mutual engagement enjoyed by members of the community and the shared bank of resources developed by and for members in their participation in the community over time. Hence the practices of such communities, which in the language classroom may focus on either or both spoken and written language, are anchored in and therefore reflect the culture or situation in which they operate.

Situated Learning Theory in the School Setting

While initially developed in a professional context termed as the 'lived-in world' (Lave and Wenger 1991:35) of African apprentice tailors, the application of SLT to the formal learning environment, largely accredited to Brown et al (1989), has since gained precedence, thereby making 'a significant impact on educational thinking' (Herrington and Oliver 1995:1).

Herrington and Oliver (1995:2) purport that 'Formal learning is quite often distinct from authentic activity, or the ordinary practices of the culture.' Brown et al (1989:34) support this viewpoint in stating that 'School activity too often tends to be hybrid, implicitly framed by one culture, but explicitly attributed to another. Classroom activity very much takes place within the culture of schools, although it is attributed to the culture of readers, writers, mathematicians, historians...' Anderson et al (1996:6) note that much of the relevant literature implies that knowledge acquired in school is of lesser value and legitimacy than knowledge acquired elsewhere.

Such views may be regarded as somewhat exaggerated considering that 'numerous studies show modest to large correlations between school achievement and work performance' (Anderson et al 1996:6), thus indicating the validity of school-based knowledge in a broader context. Nonetheless, learning is likely to be more meaningful if it takes place within a situation

that, at the very least, reflects its use in the real world of the learner beyond the school environment. It is this aspect of SLT that underlies the concern for 'the mismatch between the typical school situation and 'real world' situations' (Anderson et al, 1996:5).

This section of the discussion has presented key theoretical aspects concerning knowledge construction, social interaction and relevance of context that are recognized to contribute to the learning process. It should be noted that the notion that knowledge is actively constructed by the learner is particularly widely accepted by experts in the field. This is confirmed by Sweller (2009:127) who, in reference to this issue, notes that 'I am not aware of any theorist who objects to this characterization of learning.' Discussion in relation to constructivist instruction, however, fosters greater diversity of opinion in the literature.

2.8 Constructivist Instruction

Richardson (2003:1623) points out that while 'Constructivism as a learning theory goes back a number of decades... Constructivist teaching as a theory and practice.... has only received attention for approximately one decade.' Richardson (2003:1623) further acknowledges the 'difficulty in translating a theory of learning into a theory or practice of teaching,' thereby raising opportunities for different interpretations of how constructivism may be accommodated in instructional practice. One prominent example is the extent and nature of guidance in instruction.

2.8.1 Instructional Guidance

Sweller (2009:127) claims that 'Constructivist teaching (is) intended to teach people how to construct knowledge by withholding information from learners' thereby 'Requiring students to discover knowledge rather than explicitly providing them with essential information.' This perspective highlights the

somewhat extreme parallel frequently drawn between instructional methods associated with a constructivist perspective and the provision of minimal guidance (Kintsch 2009:223). Kirschner et al (2009:75) extend this view in noting that 'The minimally guided approach has (even) been called by various names including discovery learning,...problem-based learning,...inquiry learning, experiential learning, and constructivist learning.' Kintsch (2009:224) however, provides a more balanced view of the notion of guidance in constructivist instruction.

Kintsch (2009:224) states that 'Instructional methods are most effective when they respect the view of learning as an active (and, indeed, often effortful) process, with the right amount of guidance determined by the characteristics of the learner and the to-be learned material-which is not necessarily minimal guidance.' As such, Kintsch (2009:224) acknowledges the need to find the balance between enabling learners to engage in active learning -as defined later, as a fundamental aspect of constructivism, and providing the appropriate guidance to facilitate this end. This perspective is clearly supported by the widely acknowledged contribution of scaffolding as an instructional strategy within a social constructivist perspective.

2.8.2 Scaffolding Instruction

The notion of scaffolding was first identified in relation to learning as a 'process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts' (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976:90). The initial observations upon which the connection of scaffolding to the learning process was identified, took place in the context of children aged 3-5 years old engaged in a construction task using wooden blocks designed for the purpose of the experiment. However, the concept of scaffolding, further developed primarily through the work of psychologist Jerome Bruner, later extended into the realm of formal classroom instruction for all ages. It has since come to be recognised as one of the 'important

guiding ideas in education' (Bliss et al 1996:38) and a key instructional strategy within the framework of social constructivist practice.

In considering the notion in its original context concerning the erection or repair of buildings, scaffolding is recognised to serve as 'a facilitative structure of supports and boards (...which the workers need to carry out their work)' (Walqui 2006:164). Inherent in this perspective is the understanding that such a structure is essential in carrying out the assigned work, but is of a temporary nature, in that it can be removed once the work has been carried out (Walqui 2006:164, Hammond 2001:13). Used as a metaphor in the context of teaching and learning, scaffolding is thus understood to be the provision by teachers of the 'temporary supporting structures that will assist learners to develop new understandings, new concepts and new abilities' (Hammond 2001:13).

Scaffolded instruction is conducted through social interaction between teacher and learner, with the intention of extending the learner's 'current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence' (Donato 1994: 40), thereby aiming to reach 'the upper limit of (his/her) ZPD' (Hammond 2001:22). The teacher 'monitor(s) student's learning carefully and step(s) in to provide assistance on an as-needed basis' (Wharton-McDonald et al, 1998:116), offering 'just enough assistance so that the student can make progress on his or her own' (Pressley et al 2004:224). In due course, as the learner internalizes new knowledge and understanding, thus gaining competence to the point where he/she is able to function independently at the higher level, the teacher is able to withdraw the intense support.

In highlighting the roles that social interaction, the place of culture and context and the need for instructional guidance play in enhancing learning outcomes, the above account provides a convincing case for seating teaching

and learning experiences within a social constructivist perspective. It is this perspective that provides the theoretical framework for the prominent instructional practices of effective English teachers that emerge from this study, as will be shown in due course.

The following section focuses on aspects of the knowledge base for teachers as the second factor contributing to the increased dissatisfaction with the process-product research paradigm.

2.9 The Development of a Codified Knowledge Base for Teachers

Eraut's (1994:1) perception that the 'professions are a group of occupations the boundaries of which are ill-defined' is relevant to the longstanding debate among academics as to whether teaching qualifies as a profession that continues to 'circulate(s) around public discourse with great regularity' (Sachs 2000:77). While the reasons underlying this debate are beyond the scope of this discussion, it is pertinent to note that, in order to qualify as a profession, an occupation is generally required to fulfill specific criteria, as determined by such as Talbert and McLaughlin (1994:126) and Wise (2005). A key criterion in this endeavour is the possession and codification of 'a certain kind of knowledge' (Winch 2004:181). Kennedy (1982:193) identifies such knowledge as 'the organised body of knowledge that (is used) spontaneously and routinely in the context of ...work... (It) is a special domain of knowledge that is relevant to one's job...' known as 'working knowledge.'

In the 1980s, which, as will be recalled, were also the latter years of the implementation of the process-product paradigm as the principal design of research into effective teaching, the need to recognise teaching as a profession in its own right was increasingly highlighted (see for example Shulman 1987). Hargreaves' (1999:123) claim that 'All professionals depend

on working knowledge,' is central to the increased awareness of the need to define and codify the categories of knowledge that are likely to inform effective teaching practices – i.e. to identify the working knowledge of the effective teacher. Hence, in the pursuit to recognise teaching as a profession, a specialised knowledge base comprising 'profession-related insights that are potentially relevant to the teacher's activities' (Verloop et al 2001:443) was identified - initially by Shulman (1987) and since developed further by such as Grossman (1990), in relation to the teaching of English as a first language, and Turner- Bisset (2001). While there are variations in the categories and terminology used in the proposed knowledge bases, the same key concepts remain central to the constructs. These include knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of pedagogy – both general and subject specific, and aspects relating to the knowledge of learners.

The acknowledgement of the need for and the actual codification of a knowledge base for teachers were intrinsic to an appreciation of the value of the professional knowledge of the teacher in determining and executing effective teaching practices. This, in turn, led to the understanding that providing the opportunity for the expression of this knowledge within the framework of TER studies would facilitate more in-depth insights into effective teaching practices. As Turner- Bisset (2001:XII) notes 'Underpinning the act of teaching (is) a whole range of different kinds of knowledge...To describe teaching, good or otherwise, in terms of only competencies or skills, is to describe it inadequately, to deal merely with the observable, and to ignore the complexity of professional knowledge.'

As highlighted previously, process-product research is recognised to have produced the first major indications as to what constitutes effective teaching, whereby the extent of the effectiveness was largely measured by pupils' test scores following the employment of specified instructional practices.

However, by failing to acknowledge the need for and application of the specialized knowledge of the teacher in the execution of effective teaching practices, process-product research largely portrayed teaching as a craft occupation, whereby the teacher was viewed as 'master of procedure' (Shulman 1986b:13). The observations made and conclusions drawn from process-product research were used to promote the belief that the effective practices identified would be of universal relevance and, therefore, of value in all teaching and learning contexts. As Campbell et al (2003:352) note, process-product research 'tended to identify a general set of characteristics that define the effective teacher; ... provide a profile of teacher behaviour, knowledge and beliefs assumed to be generic...' which were 'free of contextual realities.'

There are some elements of the teacher's knowledge base, such as knowledge of general pedagogical theory, that are not context related, and may be considered as foundational to effective teaching in general. However there are also aspects of the teacher's knowledge base that are clearly more context dependent. Two of particular significance to this discussion are: knowledge of the subject matter being taught as integral to pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of the specific learners. In the following section these aspects will be examined in turn, while illustrating how, in each case, the lack of consideration of context was recognised to be a major shortcoming of process-product research.

2.9.1 Knowledge of Subject Matter as Integral to Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Despite its somewhat historical importance as described by Shulman (1986b:6), the significance of knowledge of subject matter – also referred to as 'subject knowledge' (Turner-Bisset 2001), as a factor in the equation of teacher performance in relation to student achievement was notably

marginalized by process-product studies. In his endeavour to codify the elements of the teacher's knowledge foundational to effective practice, Shulman (1986b:6) points out that in 'their...simplification of the complexities of classroom teaching, (process-product) investigators ignored one central aspect of classroom life: the subject matter.'

Subject matter knowledge, while meaning 'different things to different people' (Turner-Bisset 2001:21), is identified as 'knowledge of the major facts and concepts within a field and the relationships among them' (Grossman 1990:6). In the case of EFL for example, in order to teach effectively the teacher should not only know and be able to communicate effectively *in* the target language but also possess knowledge *about* the language – such as cultural and historical aspects. In acknowledging that a comprehensive knowledge of subject matter is fundamental to effective teaching, Shulman (1986b:6) questioned the reason for the 'sharp distinction between content and pedagogical process' in reference to the lack of consideration (in process-product research) as to how teachers effectively convey specific content knowledge to their pupils. The knowledge underlying the effective communication of subject matter to learners is identified by Shulman (1987) as pedagogical content knowledge.

The distinct lack of consideration of subject matter knowledge, as foundational to appropriate pedagogical content knowledge, contributed to the limitations of process-product research, in that such studies did not provide adequate insight into effective subject-specific teaching practices.

2.9.2 Knowledge of Specific Learners

Turner-Bisset (2000:175) identifies two aspects of a teacher's knowledge of learners - empirical knowledge and cognitive knowledge. Empirical knowledge, known also as social knowledge, is defined as 'knowledge of what

children of different ages are like' in terms of their '... interests... social nature and how contextual factors can affect their behavior and learning' (Turner-Bisset 2001:75). This form of knowledge of learners may therefore be considered generic and of relevance to teaching in all contexts. Likewise, a non-specific facet is also inherent in the concept of cognitive knowledge, which Turner-Bisset (2001:80) defines as 'the generic knowledge of child development'. However, Turner-Bisset (2001:80) also recognises the need for a more specific form of cognitive knowledge; that of knowledge of 'particular groups of learners, which grows from (the teacher's) regular contact with ...these learners.'

In reference to the primary school context, and therefore of relevance to the setting within which this study is placed, Gipps and MacGilchrist (1999:63) state that 'In order to develop a ... pedagogy which encourages effective learning we need ... teachers who ... have a good understanding of how children learn and are able to use this understanding to inform the teaching strategies they employ.' To do so, demands that 'teachers must always be creating or adapting methods to meet the requirements of the curriculum as it relates to the specific needs and abilities of their pupils at particular moments in time' (Nuthall 2004:3). Thus it became increasingly apparent that to enable effective learning for every pupil, teachers must 'customize their (teaching) behavior' (Berliner 1976:10) to accommodate the varying needs of their specific learners. The extent and nature of pupils' prior knowledge of the subject at hand, determined by experiences brought to the classroom, is a prominent example of how pupils may differ. In the context at the focus of this study this includes prior knowledge related to the home and to national identity, as well as relevant aspects of English language learning to which pupils have been previously exposed, as will be shown later.

In process-product research however, 'the teacher...was viewed as a doer, as an implementer of other people's ideas' (Freeman 2002:5) as instructed. The increasing awareness of the need for and ability of teachers to appropriately utilize their knowledge of learners in a specific context as an expression of effective teaching, contributed to the doubts cast upon the adequacy of process-product research findings in informing such practice.

In focusing on the need to take contextual concerns into account in efforts to determine instructional practices that are likely to be effective, this discussion has both supported and emphasised Shulman's (2004 :411) contention that '...teaching is so rooted in context, so rooted in the particulars...' It has been shown that, in response to new insights into theories of learning and consequently an awareness of the differential needs of learners, and the acknowledgement of the contribution of teachers' professional knowledge to effective teaching, process-product research no longer served the needs of the research and teaching communities in providing useful insight into effective teaching. As Nuthall (2004:9) notes, 'the contextual details that had been eliminated from these studies in order to make the results generalizable are what teachers needed to know in order to faithfully apply the results.' As such, Porter and Brophy's observation (1988:74) that '...educational practitioners (were) looking less for prescriptions and more for principles that (would) increase their effectiveness as ... professionals ...' contributed to the realization that 'The attempts to lay a scientific basis for the art of teaching had failed' (Gage 1989:4).

Consequently, 'stimulated by the desire to repair some flaw in the process-product paradigm' (Shulman 1986a:14), an 'array of studies' (Palardy and Rumberger 2008:111) into teaching and teacher effectiveness that significantly contrast the process-product paradigm in various ways, has been

conducted in more recent times. Such studies favour a more interpretive approach to research.

2.10 Interpretive TER in the Past Two Decades

Following the main period of process-product studies described above as the first dominant paradigm in TER, the past two decades have witnessed substantial further research into effective teachers and teaching through an interpretive approach that aims to gain 'a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom' (Kyriacou 2009:7). This approach is identified by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) and Ross et al (1992) as the second paradigm to dominate research into effective teaching. In addition to differences in the methodology that may be used, there are further distinctions between the two paradigms that are worthy of mention at this juncture.

Firstly, in contrast to process-product research that has its roots in behavioural psychology, TER studies leaning on an interpretive perspective are 'a broad and diverse group of studies with foundations in anthropology..., sociolinguistics..., and ... curriculum and teaching' (Ross et al 1992:6). Such studies, recognised as studies of 'classroom ecology' (Doyle 1977, Shulman 1986a), tend to view the classroom as a more holistic entity (Ross et al 1992:8), whereby 'teaching and learning (are seen) as a continuous interactive process, rather than reducing teaching to a few isolated factors' (Ross et al 1992:6). Inherent within this perspective is the notion that interpretive studies facilitate the consideration of the aforementioned aspect of relevance of the context in which the research is conducted, that was notably lacking in process-product research, further distinguishing the two research paradigms.

The realization that 'teaching is a highly complex, context-specific ...activity, in which differences across classrooms, schools and communities are critically important,' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1990:3), has become increasingly apparent in recent years. Process-product studies, as mentioned previously, largely lacked 'context specificity' (Hopkins and Reynolds 2001:464), leading to claims that such research failed to 'produce the kind of validated consensus about effective teaching that teachers can use to guide their practice intelligently' (Nuthall and Alton-Lee 1990:552), in specific contexts. In recognition of the need to relate to context, interpretive research studies into effective teaching place emphasis on the examination of 'the flow and texture of classroom events' as they occur (Doyle 1977:176), and 'tend to look for criteria of effectiveness within the situation' (Shulman 1986a:19). Contextual aspects influencing the classroom ecology, and more specifically the instructional practices employed by teachers, may range from subject matter to learner-related characteristics such as age, ability and learning preferences at the classroom level that are, in turn, embedded within the broader contextual influences of the school, community and culture (Ross et al 1992:6).

In recognising the importance of context in research if it is to serve the purpose of furthering the understanding of what constitutes effective teaching, it is clear that any field research undertaken is likely to benefit from relating to previous studies that are in some way of relevance to the context in which the current study is being conducted. Hence, in providing a background to and basis for this enquiry- an investigation of the instructional practices of the effective English teacher in the Israeli elementary school today, an examination of studies set in contexts that bear a significant degree of relevance to this one was conducted. The following section of this discussion will relate to this issue.

2.11 Contextual Considerations for Previous Research Studies Examined

As noted earlier, a large and varied selection of research studies offering context-specific insights into effective teaching have been conducted since the intensive period of the process-product research studies. While it could be argued that some measure of insight may be gleaned from studies conducted in a wide range of contexts, those focusing on the examination of instructional practices in unrelated subject matter, or at a very different level of education, such as the tertiary level, are likely to be of limited value in forwarding this enquiry. Thus, in an attempt to highlight the key instructional practices considered to be of direct relevance to this context, the review of the literature that included both individual studies and syntheses of studies relevant to this section of the enquiry was highly selective. The selection focused on several contexts.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that while much of the more recent research into effective teachers and teaching relate to varied aspects, such as teacher qualifications and experience, the studies reviewed for this section relate to effective instructional practices in accordance with the focus of this study. Secondly, in considering that pupils within a similar age-range are more likely to share common interests and educational needs than students at opposing ends of the age spectrum, all the studies examined for this section were conducted in a primary school setting. Thirdly, several of the studies examined were conducted in classroom settings whereby English is the pupils' second language (see Graves et al 2004, Waxman and Tellez, 2002). For such pupils, often referred to as English Language Learners (ELL), the acquisition of English is foundational to learning in general, and therefore integral to teaching and learning all subject matter.

A further contextual consideration in selecting the studies to focus on for this section of the literature review concerns the specific subject matter. Since much of what is known about effective literacy practices from research into literacy instruction of English as a first language (L1) informs the field of teaching English in the second and foreign language contexts (L2), several studies into effective literacy instruction of English as L1 were examined for the purpose of this enquiry. (See Pressley et al 1996, Chambers Chantrell, 1998, Pressley et al, 1998, Wharton-McDonald et al, 1998, Wray et al, 2000, Bogner et al, 2002, Taylor et al, 2003)

The final consideration in selecting the studies for this section concerns the conclusion highlighted by Graves et al (2004:262) whereby reading proficiency is key to continued academic success. While literacy instructional practices as a whole - incorporating the teaching of both reading and writing skills, are of prime relevance to the context at the focus of this study, the ability to read competently in English in Israel is generally regarded as the most important language skill to acquire. The practice of teaching reading in the Israeli EFL context is, as with literacy instruction in the ELL classroom, largely informed by research into reading conducted in the context of English as L1. Hence the literature reviewed for the purpose of this section includes studies relating to the effective teaching of reading of English in the L1 context. (See Allington 2002, Houtveen and van de Grift, 2007).

It is important to mention that there is a notable lack of reference to research in additional relevant contexts. For example a search for studies that focus on the effective instructional practices of elementary school teachers in the Israeli educational context bore little fruit. A similar situation regarding the search for studies of the effective instructional practices of teachers of English as a Foreign Language became apparent, since studies in this arena tend to focus largely on adult learners, rather than effective practices in EFL instruction for younger learners.

The examination of studies undertaken in the past two decades that fall into one or more of the categories outlined above and carried out in the classrooms of teachers identified as being effective, indicates that these classrooms are largely characterized by certain features- a highly prominent one being that of pupil engagement.

2.12 Pupil Engagement

Pupil engagement in learning was, as highlighted previously, an important factor in improving educational achievements in process-product research, whereby the amount of time during which pupils were engaged in academic-related activity that operated according to the Direct Instruction model of teaching, was a prime consideration. The review of the more recent studies cited above has also revealed that, in addition to being acknowledged as an educational outcome in its own right (Finn and Voelkl 1993:250), pupil engagement continues to be recognised to serve as a pre-requisite for improving academic achievements, and is, as such, closely associated with effective teaching practice. (See Pressley, et al 1998, Allington, 2002, Bogner et al, 2002, Dolezal et al, 2003, Taylor et al, 2003, Graves et al, 2004, Pressley et al, 2004). It is reasonable to assume that such consistent findings contribute to the observation of Harris (2010:131) that 'Increasing student engagement appears to have become an international priority.'

Despite the central role that student engagement is recognised to play in contributing to improved academic achievement, the literature reveals that '...there are many diverse and contradictory meanings attached to the concept (of pupil engagement) ...' (Harris 2010:132). It is therefore pertinent to clarify the concept of academic engagement for the purpose of this discussion.

2.12.1 Defining Academic Engagement

Newmann et al (1992:12) determine that 'Academic work consists of the tasks, usually specified by teachers, that students are asked to undertake in order to master the knowledge, skills and craft that serve as the instructional objectives of schooling.' It is the extent and nature of pupils' involvement with tasks designed for this purpose that is identified as academic engagement.

Dolezal, et al (2003:244) note that that 'Academic engagement begins with on-task behavior' whereby 'students (are) observed to be on-task if they (are) doing what was asked of them.' While this perception may serve as a basis for defining the concept of engagement, the implication that students may be observed as being 'either engaged or unengaged' (Newmann et al 1992:13) in academic activity is somewhat misleading, since as Newmann et al (1992:13) further note, engagement should not be viewed as existing in a 'dichotomous state', but rather 'on a continuum from less to more.' Nystrand and Gamoran (1991:262), in identifying two contrasting forms of student engagement that may be seen as being situated at opposing ends of the continuum, namely procedural and substantive engagement, confirm this perspective and offer a useful lens through which to comprehend the concept of student engagement in academic tasks.

2.12.2 Procedural Academic Engagement

Nystrand and Gamoran, (1991:262), note that 'Typically, few students are actively off-task,' but 'Rather most are at least engaged in the procedures of their...tasks.' This form of engagement, aptly termed procedural engagement, is understood to refer primarily to behaviours that can be clearly observed and therefore identified by the teacher, 'such as paying attention in class and completing assignments' (Gettinger and Seibert 2002:3). Procedural engagement, thus incorporating what Skinner and

Belmont (1993:572) identify as 'behavioral involvement' in classroom activity, may be recognised as the form of engagement referred to earlier in relation to process-product research findings.

2.12.3 Substantive Academic Engagement

Substantive engagement, according to Gettinger and Seibert (2002:3) 'transcends procedural engagement' in that it 'involves a sustained personal commitment to and engagement in the content of instruction' that in turn leads to 'substantive understanding' (Newmann et al 1992:12). As such, substantive engagement comprises an emotional component -as identified by such as Skinner and Belmont (1993:572) and Hargreaves (2003:60). Pupils who are substantively engaged in their work, while not necessarily displaying observable behaviours that indicate such, are thus likely to be all-encompassed in tasks that promote excitement, interest, and involvement.

Nystrand and Gamoran (1991:262) determine that although there is some evidence to suggest that procedural engagement is linked to educational achievement, 'Significant academic achievement is not possible without sustained, substantive engagement.' Nystrand and Gamoran (1991:262) also point out that such a proposition is founded upon the principle of reciprocity, whereby 'instruction, like any form of interaction, requires give-and-take between participants...' If, as Nystrand and Gamoran (1990:22) note, reciprocity focuses on procedural aspects only, then students too focus only on procedures that lead to limited levels of achievement since they are likely to 'have little stake in learning the material aside from extrinsic rewards and sanctions.' If, on the other hand, reciprocity focuses on substance, then pupils are likely to become substantively engaged in the learning process and 'their learning surpasses what is required to satisfy grade requirement' (Nystrand and Gamoran 1990:23).

The extent to which pupils become substantively engaged in their school work has been attributed to various factors. Marks (2000:156) for example, highlights the relationship between levels of engagement in learning and student background, noting that much previous research into pupil engagement has focused on this issue. Newmann et al (1992) relate to factors contributing to pupil engagement in academic work over which schools have direct influence, citing two main areas of focus. One such factor concerns the importance of pupil involvement with the school as a whole (Finn 1993:5, Newmann et al 1992:18). The second aspect, which is of direct relevance to this discussion, concerns authenticity in instruction, promoted by such as Newmann et al (1992, 1996), Roelofs and Terwell (1999), and Ladwig (2005).

2.13 Authentic Instruction

The concept of authenticity is not new in pedagogical concerns. Splitter (2009:143) refers to the notion of authenticity as being central to Deweyan philosophy, in that Dewey essentially 'Reject(ed) the division between the classroom and the 'real world' (Splitter 2009:143). In more recent times, interest in authenticity in pedagogical issues concerning instruction and assessment has been renewed in what can be interpreted as an embracement of post-behaviourist views of learning.

In examining the concept of authenticity in instruction in the following section, the notion will first be clarified for the purpose of this discussion. This will be followed by an examination of key aspects of authenticity in instruction and how they may be accommodated in instructional practice, as a central concern of this enquiry. It should be noted that while much of the more recent literature focuses on authenticity in relation to the integration of technology in teaching, this aspect is not of concern to this discussion.

2.13.1 Defining Authenticity

Wehlage et al (1996:22) note that 'The term *authentic* commonly refers to something that is real, genuine or true rather than artificial, fake or misleading.' In reference to tasks and activities taking place within the classroom environment, the term is 'unfortunately ...commonly used to refer only to the 'real world' dimension' (Newmann 2000:2). When referring specifically to second or foreign language instruction, Cholewinski (2009:300) highlights the notably limited but common use of the term authentic as 'a synonym for classroom *realia* – any material not specifically designed for instruction (e.g. newspapers, movies, song lyrics...).' Similarly, authentic texts are often referred to in connection with foreign or second language instruction as being unabridged or unaltered for the purpose of instruction, with the internet being an invaluable source of authentic material in this sense. Such perspectives however, do not fully capture the sense of authenticity in instruction of relevance to this discussion.

Wehlage et al (1996:22) note that the teacher directs teaching and learning through two primary tasks: instruction and assessment of pupil performance. In order to appreciate what the notion of authenticity in these aspects of educational activity might entail, Newmann et al (1996:282) suggest that we look at the demands of the real world and consider 'the kinds of mastery demonstrated by successful scientists, musicians, entrepreneurs, politicians, craftspeople.....We assume that success in these endeavors usually represents significant and worthwhile intellectual work.' It is this perception of authenticity in an educational context, whereby activity undertaken in the classroom that reflects the intellectual demands of real life situations is embraced, that best serves this discussion.

2.13.2 Authenticity in Instruction

Behaviourist theories of learning promoted the need for active instruction, as discussed earlier in relation to process-product research, whereby the focus was on the teacher channeling knowledge directly to the learner. In contrast, Fred Newmann and associates (1996) emphasised the need for instruction that promotes the involvement of pupils through active learning (Newmann et al 1996:281).

Kyriacou (1992; 310) refers to two interpretations of the term 'active learning.' Firstly, in the more widely used interpretation, pupils engage in active learning through activities that offer '...a marked degree of ownership and control...', and are 'open ended' (Kyriacou 1992; 310). The second interpretation of the notion active learning refers to the 'mental experience characterised by developing understanding' (Kyriacou 1992; 310). It is largely the latter perception, whereby pupils engage in relevant and quality intellectual activity, in accordance with the notion of authenticity as defined above, which is promoted in Newmann et al's (1996) model of Authentic Pedagogy.

Newmann et al (1996) identify three elements which, as Wehlage et al (1996:24) emphasise, 'are critical to significant intellectual accomplishment' that must be inherent in pedagogical practice if active learning is to be promoted. These are: knowledge construction, disciplined inquiry, and value beyond the classroom. An extensive quantitative study conducted in mathematics and social studies classes in twenty-four American public elementary, middle and high schools that had undergone measures of restructuring (Newmann et al, 1996), confirmed that instruction incorporating these three elements contributes to pupils' academic achievements.

Newmann et al's (1996) ideas may be seen as a watershed in this arena, spurring interest, further research and/or educational reform that embrace

the notion of authenticity in instruction, in varied contexts. Notable examples include Holland (Roelofs and Terwel 1999) in the late 1990s, and Queensland (Lingard et al 2003) and New South Wales (NSW DET 2003) in Australia in the following decade. In a similar vein, a series of studies conducted by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme across the UK over an extensive period of a decade in varying contexts is worthy of mention. This project resulted in the identification of ten key principles for effective teaching as presented by James and Pollard (2011). The first three of those principles – whereby effective pedagogy: a) 'equips learners for life in its broadest sense', (James and Pollard 2011:283), b) 'engages with valued forms of knowledge' and c) 'recognises the importance of prior experiences and learning' (James and Pollard 2011:284) are all integral to the different aspects of authentic instruction, as noted above, and therefore to intellectual quality in instruction. A further example of the importance of authenticity in instruction is illustrated by Stoll et al (2003) who identify eleven ways in which teachers may enhance pupils' learning. These include making connections, scaffolding, promoting relevance, fostering independent learning and fostering thinking. All of these elements are integral to the notion of authenticity in instruction, and proved to be of great significance in this study, as will be shown later.

While the terminology used and emphases placed on different aspects vary, these studies support the contention that the concept of authenticity in general and the basic tenets as identified by Newmann et al (1996) in pedagogy overall, and in instructional practices in particular, are highly valued in the quest for promoting substantial intellectual quality in the classroom, upon which improved learning outcomes may be established. The following section offers insight into practices that may be categorised under the heading of authentic instruction, drawn from a synthesis of relevant literature. The first of these is considered within the realm of Knowledge Construction, followed by an examination of the notions of Disciplined Inquiry and Relevance in instruction. While each aspect is presented separately for

the purpose of this discussion, they do share common ground that will be highlighted as appropriate.

2.13.3 Providing Opportunity for Knowledge Construction

As noted earlier, developments in the theory of learning in recent decades clearly indicate that learning is no longer considered a matter of mere transference of knowledge from the more to the less knowledgeable through passive channels, but rather one of knowledge construction in which the learner is an active participant. According to the cognitive constructivist approach, information is acquired and transformed to knowledge through individualised processes. In contrast the social constructivist perspective highlights the need for learners to engage in learning activity through social interaction with a more knowledgeable other, as a prerequisite to the eventual internalization and utilization of new knowledge at the personal level.

In the formal learning environment, the construction of knowledge may be encouraged in various ways by the teacher as the more knowledgeable other. The following section highlights three main aspects of instructional practice recognised to facilitate the construction of knowledge. These concern prior knowledge, higher order thinking skills and instructional coherence.

Prior Knowledge

Prior knowledge (also referred to as background knowledge), may be defined simply as 'what a person already knows about a topic' (Marzano 2004:1). The notion is often related to in the literature in connection with relevance in learning. However, since it is considered foundational to further learning through knowledge construction, prior knowledge is discussed in this section.

Prior knowledge is recognised to be kept in the long-term memory and organised into schemas, defined by Ormrod (1998:280) as 'organized bodies of information about specific topics.' The construction of knowledge involves referring to existing schemas or mental models as a frame of reference and connecting them to new, incoming information through cognitive processes and skills such as interpretation, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, as identified by Sisserson et al (2002:65). New knowledge and ideas are formed and prior conceptions are restructured, reorganised and extended to create new understandings. Hence, as Myhill and Brackley (2004:264) explain '...the learner actively constructs knowledge and understanding through interactions between new knowledge and previous knowledge: our understanding builds and accumulates upon prior understanding.' In light of this perception, relevant prior knowledge is considered 'an essential variable in learning' (Dochy et al, 1999:145).

While the ongoing process of knowledge construction based on prior knowledge undoubtedly occurs in varying situations throughout life, the formal learning environment clearly affords the opportunity for pupils to draw upon their background knowledge in order to promote further learning. As such, 'a primary responsibility (of the teacher) is to enable connections to be made between the 'already known' and the 'new', and to acknowledge that what the child already knows might impact upon how he or she responds to new information or ideas.' (Myhill and Brackley 2004:265). In order to support the effective construction of knowledge for all pupils, teachers must know where best 'to begin instruction at a level suitable for ... (pupils' existing) knowledge base' (Ormrod 1998:269). Hence, in acknowledging that learners bring with them diverse background knowledge to the formal learning experience- both in quantity and content, the baseline of relevant knowledge that will subsequently serve as the starting point for the construction of new knowledge for all pupils, must be established by the

teacher. Then, through the purposeful employment of specific instructional practices or 'intentional instructional interventions' (King 1994:339), and the provision of suitable tasks and activities, teachers may direct pupils towards making connections within the parameters of their relevant prior knowledge or schemas to new, incoming information, in order to construct new knowledge.

There are several possible aspects of pupils' prior knowledge that bear significance to learning in general and language learning in particular as a focal point of this discussion. Waxman and Tellez (2002:14) make reference to the importance of reminding students of material covered in previous lessons, or creating lessons that relate to the cultural beliefs and practices of pupils. Research by Pressley et al (2004:224) reveals that effective teachers make pupils aware of 'connections across content areas.' Furthermore, research into reading comprehension spanning over several decades has repeatedly highlighted the need to activate pupils' background knowledge of the content of a text prior to reading, in order to maximize comprehension (Doctorow et al, 1978:109 and Johnson 1982).

Higher Order Thinking Skills

Lewis and Smith's (1993:131) perception that some confusion as to what is meant by higher order thinking continues to be pertinent, since terms such as critical thinking, problem-solving and creative thinking are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature. A detailed examination of the similarities and differences between the terms is, however, beyond the scope of this discussion. As such the helpful proposition offered by Lewis and Smith (1993:134) whereby higher order thinking serves as a term to encompass skills relevant to all of the above categories will be used.

Lewis and Smith (1993:134) determine that 'Higher order thinking occurs when a person takes new information and information stored in memory and

interrelates and/or rearranges and extends this information to achieve a purpose or find possible answers in perplexing situations.’ Thus, in contrast to thinking skills of a lower order that rely on memory, or, at best, literal comprehension, ‘Higher-order thinking ...requires students to manipulate information and ideas in ways that transform their meaning and implications’ (Newmann and Whelage 1993:9). This involves such as the ability to apply prior knowledge to new situations in order to solve problems, explain phenomena and justify opinions.

While not a newly-identified concept nor its value newly recognised, higher order thinking is considered crucial to both authentic pedagogical practices (White and Mitchelmore, 2004:589) and in turn, knowledge construction (Avery 1999:368). Higher order thinking is thus considered central to and evidence of effective learning, and has indeed been identified as the ‘... the hallmark of successful learning at all levels’ (Resnick 1987:45). However, the extent to which the development of higher order thinking is fostered in the classroom is primarily dependent upon the nature of the teacher’s practice. This perspective is confirmed by Killen (2006:21) who states that: ‘The way we teach can encourage students to think in different ways’ since ‘Higher-order thinking is unlikely to occur unless teachers engage learners in activities that deliberately promote (such)... thinking.’ As such, the facilitation of the development and use of higher order skills through appropriate instruction, such as engaging pupils in discussion or setting suitable written tasks, is a key element of effective teaching practice.

Instructional Coherence

According to Chen and Li (2010:712) the concept of coherence has been examined in relation to many disciplines, wherein research into coherence in an educational context, referred to as instructional coherence, is recognised to be a relatively new field of exploration (Chen and Li 2010:715). In the

therefore somewhat limited but relevant literature (Snipes and Casserly 2004) the concept of instructional coherence has been examined in various contexts. In the broadest sense, such research has been conducted across and within urban districts (Snipes and Casserly 2004). Newmann et al (2001) discuss instructional coherence in relation to programmes and curricula at the school level, while Chen and Li (2010), Fernandez et al (1992), and Seidel et al (2005), focus on the concept within the framework of a single lesson. While much of the prominent research into coherence in lessons has been conducted in the context of mathematics instruction, the concept is also of relevance to the instruction of English in the context at the focus of this study, as the findings presented in Chapter 5 reveal.

Fernandez et al (1992:335) make reference to 'a well-told story' as an analogy of a coherent lesson in stating that: 'The events (in a story) must be organized and interconnected such that each is logically connected to the events that precede and follow it. A good story has a beginning, middle, and end, and a consistent theme or themes that run throughout...' As such, coherence in a lesson as a whole is recognised to comprise two main features as also perceived by Chen and Li (2010:713) - a structured and logical sequence of events whereby each stage of the lesson serves as the basis for the next, and lessons built around a limited number of topics that enable in-depth consideration of the topic. However instructional coherence may also be realised in the execution of particular aspects or parts of a lesson through scaffolded instruction.

Scaffolding for Instructional Coherence

Scaffolding instruction by a more knowledgeable other, is recognised, as described earlier, to provide the necessary support to enable pupils to extend their knowledge and abilities beyond the level that they would be likely to achieve on their own. In scaffolding instruction, the teacher guides pupils through a process of knowledge construction in logically sequenced and

therefore coherent steps tailored to the specific needs of pupils. This may be done using various instructional procedures and activities. Wharton-McDonald et al (1998:116), for example, observed the frequent use of questioning to guide and scaffold students' thought processes. Houtveen and van de Grift (2007) refer to the use of scaffolded instruction through guided practice (Houtveen and van de Grift 2007:177) in developing metacognitive knowledge for reading strategies and skills by activating pupils' prior knowledge and using contextual clues such as layout and title to predict text content (Houtveen and van de Grift 2007:187).

While identified as an effective instructional practice in its own right, such as in the research conducted by James and Pollard (2011) referred to earlier, and an examination of key effective practices in teaching literacy (Pressley et al, 1998 and Wray et al, 2000), scaffolding may also be regarded as an element of instructional coherence which is, in turn, identified as being integral to the facilitation of knowledge construction.

The above consideration of aspects relating to the construction of knowledge as an element of the authenticity in instruction considered integral to improving learning outcomes leads to the notion of Disciplined Inquiry, as a main channel through which knowledge may be constructed.

2.13.4 Disciplined Inquiry

Disciplined Inquiry is identified by Newman et al (1996:283) as the type of cognitive work necessary for the production of such as high quality scientific research or investigative journalism, and is recognised to comprise three main facets (Newman et al 1996). The first necessitates the use of, and thus may be regarded as an extension of, the prior knowledge discussed above of relevance to the inquiry.

The second aspect concerns the development of in-depth understanding and knowledge (as identified by such as Newmann and Wehlage 1993:9 and Newmann et al 1996:283). 'Deep knowledge' (Newmann and Wehlage 1993:9, NSW DET 2003 :9) and 'deep understanding' (NSW DET 2003:9) may be fostered through 'sustained examination' (Newmann 1990:50) of a limited number of topics and issues, as opposed to a 'superficial acquaintance with many' (Newmann 2000:2), through 'exposure to pieces of knowledge' (Newmann et al 1996:283) thus representing what Newmann and Wehlage (1993:9) identify as knowledge that is 'thin or superficial'.

In order to acquire cohesive, meaningful understanding and knowledge that can be applied in new situations, relationships between pieces of knowledge must be looked for, tested and created (Newmann et al 1996:283), or, as confirmed by Knobloch (2003:24), by exploring the 'connections and relationships ... to produce relatively complex understandings'. As such, learners must 'address central ideas of a topic or discipline with enough thoroughness' (Knobloch 2003:24) and be allowed to express their findings and understandings through the third facet of disciplined inquiry; that of elaborated communication (Newmann et al 1996:283, Knobloch 2003:24).

Elaborated Communication

Communication in classrooms may occur in both the spoken and written form. For the most part, such communication involves teachers posing closed questions to pupils that demand limited or shallow responses that are expected to conform to the teacher's prespecified ideas (Gamoran and Nystrand 1992:43) and/or require 'only brief answers: true or false....fill in the blank...' (Newmann et al 1996:284). In such circumstances, which are common occurrences in the EFL elementary school classroom in Israel, pupils are merely 'engaged in the procedures of discourse' (Gamoran and Nystrand

1992:43). Elaborated communication practices, however, as the term suggests, offer contrasting opportunities.

Elaborated communication occurs when pupils engage in meaningful, 'substantive' (Knobloch 2003:24, NSW DET 2003:11) discourse around a focus of inquiry 'in a way that builds an improved and shared understanding of ideas or topics' (Knobloch 2003:24). Hence, by facilitating in-depth learning, learners are afforded the opportunity to express themselves through elaborated written, oral and/or artistic forms of communication. (NSW DET 2003:11). This may be achieved through the teacher-pupil interaction that often characterises classrooms and/or collaborative pupil-pupil interaction.

Working Collaboratively

The notion of pupils' working together to share knowledge is not new. Since the 1980s in the field of EFL instruction, for example, cooperative learning as a favoured methodology has featured prominently in the relevant literature. This phenomenon emerged from the understanding that learning is fundamentally a social enterprise, as purported by Vygotsky and discussed earlier. In more recent times however, the notion of collaborative learning is increasingly used in the literature. In some cases the terms 'cooperative' and 'collaborative' appear to be used interchangeably, thus giving rise to possible misunderstandings and confusion. However, while there are similarities between them there are also significant differences.

In both instances pupils are required to work together. Cooperative learning is recognised to involve largely teacher directed activities that necessitate working together to attain an outcome whereby each learner is accountable for his/her own performance in contributing to the task in hand (Johnson and Johnson 1999:68). Collaborative learning, in contrast, is 'a method that implies working in a group of two or more to achieve a common goal, while

respecting each individual's contribution to the whole' (McInnerney and Robert 2004:205). Hence, as concisely stated by Fawcett and Garton (2005:158), 'Peer collaboration (as distinct from ...cooperative learning) involves children working together to complete a single, unified task that represents the shared meaning and conclusions of the group as a unit.'

The ability to work collaboratively is at the forefront of demands in the modern workplace, as advertisements for job vacancies at local, national and international levels in Israel and elsewhere continue to indicate. In providing for such demands, schools must offer opportunities for learners to develop the ability to work collaboratively. This may be done for example, through offering projects and tasks that enable pupils to work as a cohesive team that considers and negotiates the views of its members with the aim of creating a joint product. The EFL classroom lends itself to such a purpose through both written and spoken communication in English as the target language.

It is applicable at this point to make reference to and indeed place the notion of collaboration within the theoretical perspective of social learning. While parallels may be drawn between the learning experience within a social constructivist framework identified initially by Vygotsky and presented earlier, and that of a collaborative nature, there are some fundamental differences indicating that collaborative activity may be more appropriately considered within a co-constructivist approach to learning.

Co-Constructivism

Mercer (2000:90) in noting that 'Vygotsky's theory ... is essentially concerned with teaching and learning...' highlights the relationship and interaction between the learner and a more capable other, whereby, as will be recalled, the teacher scaffolds the learner's progress within his ZPD, thus to some extent at least, directing and navigating the learning procedure. In the case

of the collaborative learning situation, there may or may not be significant difference in the capabilities of the participants, but rather knowledge of different areas that are all relevant and thus offer valid contributions to the joint venture.

If, however, the group working collaboratively in the classroom situation – which may be paralleled to the notion of a Community of Practice as referred to earlier- does consist of more and less capable participants, the construction of knowledge is not likely to be scaffolded by the more capable peers. Instead, knowledge is more likely to be developed in an ongoing process of sharing ideas as they arise through discussion and negotiation in a more spontaneous fashion. This notion, in contrast to his perception of Vygotskian thought mentioned above, is aptly and concisely described by Mercer (2000:90) as 'joint learning.'

Hence, while the principle of socially constructed knowledge is surely applicable to the collaborative situation, the above definition of collaboration implies that knowledge is co-constructed through opportunities for the equal contribution by all parties involved. While some may equate a co-constructivist approach with a Vygotskian social constructivist approach to learning, the former may be considered a model for learning in its own right that also draws upon the afore-mentioned principles of 'Communities of Practice' (Lave and Wenger 1991), is 'much less familiar' than other models and to date has not 'become embedded into mainstream educational practice'. (Askew and Lodge 2000:11).

Disciplined Inquiry, as the sum of the parts mentioned above, is viewed as a channel through which new knowledge and understanding, based on prior knowledge, are created, by means of in-depth inquiry that facilitates and indeed, necessitates the elaborated communication of ideas through teacher-

pupil and/or pupil-pupil interaction in spoken, written or artistic forms. This may be optimally achieved through instruction that bears relevance to the context in which learning is situated.

2.13.5 Relevance

Newmann et al (1992:26) note that 'Students often explain their disengagement by calling schoolwork irrelevant: that is, unrelated to issues, competencies or concerns of the real world.' While such as Wehlage et al (1996:27) do not advocate entirely abandoning the use of what is considered to be unauthentic work, if classroom activity is to engage pupils in learning that leads to enhanced achievement it must promote significant relevance in the learning experience. Although there are differences in the terminology used and the emphases placed on aspects concerning relevance, the recognition of this perception is apparent in models of instruction that advocate the value of authenticity in enhancing learning referred to earlier.

Newmann et al (1996) refer to 'value beyond the classroom' whereby the learning experience offers elements of 'personal, aesthetic or social significance.' (Newmann 2000:1). The model of Productive Pedagogies, (Department of Education, Queensland 2002:23) founded upon Newmann's original framework of Authentic Pedagogy incorporates the notion of relevance under the heading of 'Connectedness', describing it as 'the extent to which the lesson has value and meaning beyond the instructional context, making a connection to the wider social context within which students live.' The notion of 'Significance' is related to in the model of instruction entitled Quality Teaching (NSW DET 2003:9) as 'pedagogy that helps make learning more meaningful and important to students. Such pedagogy draws clear connections with students' prior knowledge and identities, with contexts outside of the classroom and with multiple ways of knowing or cultural perspectives.' Roelofs and Terwel (1999:206) offer a slightly different perspective by relating to the concept of relevance in learning under two

clearly defined categories – '*personal value*' or '*connectedness*' to the students' personal worlds and *value for the professional world*.'

Notions pertaining to the concept of relevance in instruction may thus be understood, referred to and emphasised in different ways and to varying degrees. There are three areas that arise from within the examples cited above that warrant discussion in relation to the context at the focus of this study. These are: the topic of lessons, the task type that includes the nature of the products, and life skills of relevance to the society in which the learning is situated.

Topic

The world from which pupils enter the formal learning environment is shaped by a myriad of influences. In the Jewish sector of Israeli society for example, values based on Zionist ideals and Jewish tradition are conveyed, albeit not exclusively, at a national level. Ethnic backgrounds, and subsequently domestic languages and cultures, within the Jewish population vary greatly with ongoing immigration from all over the world throughout the history of the State. Age, interests, likes and dislikes characteristic of contemporary and relevant peer culture are also significant influences in shaping pupils' worlds. All of these elements contribute to the afore-mentioned background knowledge and experiences that pupils bring to the learning situation from their own, and therefore relevant, worlds.

Tobias (1994:50) makes reference to the place of prior knowledge in establishing pupils' interest in learning. Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000:152) in turn, maintain that the '*influence (of interest) on academic performance has been established across individuals, knowledge domains and subject areas*.' As such, offering instruction based on topics of relevance and therefore of interest to pupils is likely to have a positive effect on levels of academic achievement.

Task and Product

Newmann (2000:2) notes that tasks pupils are asked to undertake in the formal learning environment are often such as '...exercises ... contrived only for the purposes of showing competence or to please teachers,' whereby the product is the completed exercise. The experience of this researcher indicates that such a perception, whereby both the task and the nature of the product created as a result of the task bear little relevance to the pupils' world beyond the school gate, often characterises the EFL classroom in the Israeli elementary school. For example, the conventional notebook is widely used by pupils in the EFL classroom in Israel. It is not uncommon for pupils to be required to copy and complete standard language practice exercises from the text book in their notebooks. The notebook is then closed and placed directly back into the pupil's schoolbag or, at best, submitted to the teacher to be checked and later returned to the pupil. Such practice however, does not accommodate the vision of instruction that bears any relevance to real life situations.

Produce from the language classroom that does reflect relevance and therefore value and meaning to pupils may incorporate a variety of task types and subsequent produce, as highlighted by such as Newmann et al (1992, 1996). These include: the production of discourse, which although may serve as a means to an end, is, in the language classroom, also considered an end in itself, and written products that embrace a host of different text types such as emails and articles, and creative products, including those of a tangible nature, such as models and pictures, and performances of a musical or dramatic nature. In each of these examples of tasks and produce, the relevance of significance to pupils 'beyond demonstration of success to a teacher' (Newmann 2000:2) thereby reflecting the essence of authenticity in the classroom, is apparent.

Life Skills

Life skills demanded by society today, that must therefore be reflected in the classroom, may be divided into two categories. The first is that of interpersonal skills, which necessitates the ability to work productively within a team. The notion of collaboration as discussed earlier is fundamental to this concept. Further skills likely to contribute to success both at the personal level and in the broader perspective, and may be seen as the foundations for developing interpersonal skills, are those of an intrapersonal nature. Learner autonomy is a key aspect of intrapersonal skills that may be promoted in the classroom.

Learner Autonomy

Assor et al (2002:274) observe that '...there is no one type of autonomy-affecting (teacher) behaviour that is always the best means for supporting students' autonomy'. As such, varying practices employed by the teacher may contribute to the development of learner autonomy. Pertinent examples include: facilitating the self-management of time and workload (Greenhill 2009:6), pupils' monitoring of their own behaviour (Wharton-McDonald et al 1998:118), self-evaluation of written products using checklists (Chambers Chantrell 1998:376) and pupil choice.

It is worthy of mention that the place of pupil choice in learning promotes discussion in the literature. The extent of its contribution to the interest and subsequent motivation that, in turn, are likely to enhance learning outcomes is not conclusive, as illustrated by Assor et al (2002:273) and Flowerday (2004:94). However, while of interest, a detailed examination of this issue is beyond the scope of this discussion. As such, the perceptions of Flowerday et al (2004: 94), who note that 'It has been suggested that allowing students to make choices within the context of instruction will increase their sense of autonomy,' and Lee (1998:283), who go so far as to identify choice for

learners as essential in promoting learner autonomy, serve to confirm the notion that pupil choice as an element of learner autonomy, interpersonal skills and therefore relevance in instruction, is likely to contribute to improved learning outcomes for the purpose of this study.

In highlighting the need to bridge the gap between the world of the pupils and the traditionally separate world of school to provide relevant instruction that is likely to enhance learning outcomes, several aspects have been considered. In placing the various aspects within a more holistic framework it is helpful to consider the notion of 'third space' (Kuhlthau et al, 2007).

Third Space

Kuhlthau et al (2007:32) define the first space as 'the personal and cultural out-of-school knowledge' thus incorporating elements referred to above. The second space conveys 'the official curricular knowledge' within the formal school setting. The third space is subsequently defined as 'where the (first) two (spaces) overlap and merge to create a new, hybrid form' as in the analogy of the 'two types of roses (that when) ... mixed they create an altogether new form.' (Kuhlthau et al, 2007:32).

In creating 'third space' teachers are providing a learning environment that is, in effect, a meeting of the waters. The school curriculum serves as the framework for developing a syllabus that is built on content, incorporates tasks, demands products and fosters skills tailored to the world of the pupils in any given context. This perspective is in accordance with the main principles of Situated Learning Theory as highlighted earlier. Such an approach is rich in authenticity and therefore likely, as determined earlier, to enhance learning outcomes.

2.14 Summary

This chapter has engaged in what may be termed as an 'inquiry trail' (Wellington et al 2005:73). The trail, in exploring main facets of Teacher Effectiveness Research and learning theory, has identified the importance of a constructivist perspective in promoting learning, highlighting the significant roles that social interaction, scaffolded instruction and relevance to and of context play in enabling learners to construct knowledge rather than have it delivered to them. The account culminated in an appreciation of the role that authenticity in instruction, founded upon key aspects of Social Constructivist and Situated Learning perspectives, is likely to play in contributing to improved learning outcomes.

Wehlage et al (1996:27), in reference to Newmann et al's (1996) notion of Authentic Pedagogy, make it clear that instruction is not expected to incorporate all the elements of authenticity in pedagogy in every aspect of classroom activity all the time. Indeed, this would be a tall order for any teacher. Nonetheless, the ideas presented in this chapter provide a convincing case for the significant integration of the key aspects of authentic pedagogical models in instructional practice.

While, as discussed earlier, Newmann et al's (1996) model of Authentic Pedagogy evolved in relation to and from a specific context, the underlying principles and components are clearly generic in nature. As such, in efforts to improve learning achievements the model has lent itself to varied contexts – such as Holland and Australia as cited previously, albeit with adaptations as considered pertinent. However, the notion of authenticity in instruction as determined above has not yet been explored in relation to EFL instruction in Israel.

Based on these premises, the notion of authenticity in instruction, founded upon the model of Authentic Pedagogy as proposed by Newmann et al, (1996) and later tailored to other contexts as discussed previously, was considered a valuable framework within which to explore the instructional practices of the EFL elementary school teacher in Israel. It is this perspective that informed and, indeed, shaped, the collection and analysis of data for this enquiry. The following chapter presents the rationale for and design of the study, detailing how the data were collected and analysed in light of specific contextual considerations.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In aiming to examine key instructional practices of effective elementary school EFL teachers in the Israeli school system, the insights gleaned from the literature review in the previous chapter offer a framework in which to anchor the inquiry. The framework used is founded upon the key aspects of Newmann et al's (1996) instructional model of Authentic Pedagogy and subsequent related insights discussed previously, which, in turn, were shown to be firmly rooted within the theoretical perspectives of Vygotsky's (1978) notion of Social Constructivism and that of Lave and Wenger's (1991) Situated Learning.

This chapter will focus on the methodology of the investigation conducted in relating to the research question 'How do effective teachers of English in the Israeli (Jewish sector) elementary school facilitate learning?' The rationale for a qualitative approach to the research through a multiple case study will be presented, followed by a description of what the study entailed, how it was executed and how the data collected were analysed. The final section of the account will relate to the credibility of the study.

3.2 Why Use a Qualitative Approach?

Nunan (1992:3) identifies research as 'a systematic process of inquiry consisting of three elements or components (1) a question, problem or hypothesis, (2) data, (3) analysis and interpretation of data.' Studies executed through this process in educational research may vary greatly and serve to inform different bodies – including relevant stakeholders, and as in the case of this study, the researcher's own practice and/or potentially the practice of others.

Cohen et al (2000:49) point out, 'The planning of educational research is not an arbitrary matter...', but is founded upon prior ontological beliefs and perspectives that 'relate(s) to the nature of reality and its characteristics' (Creswell 2007:16) of the researcher. Hence the nature of the process undertaken in a given study is largely dependent on the perspectives of the researcher. Life experience, in both personal and professional capacities, has promoted this researcher's ontological view that reality cannot be determined or defined objectively. Rather, reality is constructed and interpreted individually. What may be a truth for one person in a given context may or may not be so for another. Hence reality is defined from a subjective perspective. The nature of the researcher's ontological beliefs underlie the epistemological position – that is views about the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired, embraced by the researcher. The epistemological view of this researcher is compatible with a social constructivist perspective, whereby knowledge is understood to be socially constructed and thus context specific. It is this perspective that determined the approach to this enquiry.

Two principal approaches to research are referred to in the literature: those of a quantitative and qualitative nature. The 'binary distinction (made) between qualitative and quantitative research' (Cohen et al 2000:49) is recognised to represent different epistemological views or ways of thinking about the world (Holliday 2007:5, Nunan 1992:10). While the claim by some that such a distinction between the two approaches is somewhat 'simplistic and naïve' (Cohen et al 2000:49), may be pertinent, it nonetheless offers a useful lens through which to consider how best to design and conduct a specific research project. Hence, in outlining the rationale for this enquiry, it is appropriate to briefly examine some main aspects of quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

The conviction that objective, general truths exist and may be identified, thereby facilitating the formation of general laws (Zumwalt 1982:235), is central to positivist thinking. This perspective underlies a quantitative approach to research, whereby the view that the 'Knowledge gained through scientific and experimental research is objective and quantifiable' (Merriam 1998:4) is prominent. Such an approach, as pointed out by Nunan (1992:13), is generally stimulated by a hypothesis or theory for which evidence is then sought to either support or refute the theory.

However, Anderson (1998:80) acknowledges that a main purpose of '...educational research is ... discovering how and why people in educational settings behave the way they do.' This view might be seen as underlying the claim that a quantitative approach to research is 'not the appropriate one for understanding educational phenomena' (Zumwalt 1982:235). While much of the influential process-product research was quantitative in nature, thus negating Zumwalt's somewhat extreme perception, in considering the unending possible situations that human nature generates, a qualitative approach lends itself more readily to the more interpretive approach to educational research referred to earlier, in contrast to a quantitative perspective.

Merriam (1998:5) identifies qualitative research as an 'umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain meaning of social phenomena.' Proponents of a qualitative approach to research adhere to the belief that reality is socially constructed and, therefore, inevitably, context bound. Hence what constitutes reality or truth is open to interpretation by the researcher. It may therefore be concluded that 'When researchers conduct qualitative research, they are embracing the idea of multiple realities' (Creswell 2007:16), through what is recognised as 'a form of interpretive inquiry' (Creswell 2009:176).

In an educational context, qualitative studies 'are, by their nature, in-depth portraits of the experiences of specific students and teachers...(that) provide valuable insight into the relationships between various aspects of teacher practice and student learning' (Wenglinsky 2002:6), and are carried out on site i.e. in the classroom and/or institutional setting as a whole. It is based on this premise that this study adopts a qualitative perspective, executed through a multiple case study. The ensuing discussion will examine case study in general and in relation to this enquiry.

3.3 Case Study Research

Case study has been identified in the literature in different ways. Yin (2003:14) makes reference to the case study as 'a comprehensive research strategy.' Denscombe (2007:35) identifies case study as 'a broad approach to social research', and Wellington (2003:18) relates to the case study as a method of research. However one chooses to denote the notion of case study research, it is Nunan's (1992:74) perception that 'Methodologically, the case study is a 'hybrid', in that it generally uses a range of methods for collecting and analyzing data' that best serves to fully comprehend the all-compassing nature of case study research, as identified by Yin (2003.14).

Despite being considered by some as a 'soft option' (Robson 2003:179), in that it does not provide what is often considered the more objective evidence characteristic of a quantitative research approach, case study research 'has... recently come into its own' (Gillham 2001:2), as the need for insight into and illuminated meanings of what takes place in complex social units (Merriam 1998:41), such as the classroom, as highlighted in the last chapter, gain prominence. This need may, of course, be accommodated across a more extensive sample of classrooms. However the implementation of a case study that focused on the practice of a small number of teachers was regarded as being best suited to the purpose of this study, for two main

reasons. Firstly, the number of teachers who fit the required profile for the purpose of this study, as will be discussed further in due course, is far from extensive. Secondly, had the practice of a more extensive number of teachers been examined, the constraints of the resources of time and personnel within this study would have allowed for only a minimal number of observations in any one school. As such, the valuable opportunity to re-examine, and thus verify or otherwise, phenomena as they occurred from one visit to the next may have been lost.

3.4 The Case Study at the Focus of this Research Enquiry

Planning and executing case study research clearly demands the careful consideration of key points at all stages of the procedure. In the initial stages, the type of case study and the cases themselves must be selected to suit the designated purpose, and the boundaries of the case(s) must be clearly defined accordingly. Procedures and methods for collecting and analyzing data must be determined and issues of credibility must be accommodated. The ensuing sections will discuss these elements in relation to the multiple case study at the focus of this discussion, thereby presenting the rationale for its design and execution.

3.4.1 The Type of Case Study

Varying attempts to identify types of and consequently categorise case studies have been carried out, (Wellington, 2003:91). Perhaps the most renowned and useful classification is proposed by Stake (1995:3) and is based on the purpose or intent (Creswell 2007:74) of the study.

Stake (1995:3) refers to three types of case study: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. The intrinsic case study centres on a specific case of particular interest in and of itself to the researcher. An instrumental case study, in contrast, is conducted in order to gain insight into a selected issue of interest.

The collective case study, also termed a multiple case study (Merriam 1998, Creswell 2007), may be seen as an extended version of the instrumental case study, in that 'the issue or concern is again selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue...' (Creswell 2007: 73). It is this notion that best describes this study. The selection of cases to be studied in both single and multiple case studies necessitates the process of purposive sampling.

3.4.2 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling (Wellington 2003:59) in relation to case study research, (also referred to as 'purposeful' by Creswell, 2007:75), is, as the term suggests, identified as being the 'choice of sampling that serves the purposes/objectives of the investigation...' (Wellington 2003:61). As such, the selection of the case or cases to be studied is not a random occurrence, but rather one whereby 'the basis of their (the cases') relevance to the practical problems or theoretical issues being researched' (Denscombe 2007:40) is of prime consideration. Inherent in this perception is the notion that cases are 'selected on the basis of known attributes' (Denscombe 2007:39) that either bear similarities to other cases chosen and are thus 'typical instance(s)' or are more 'extreme instance(s)' that offer 'something of a contrast with the norm' (Denscombe 2007:40).

In the effort to gain insight into the key pedagogical practices of effective EFL teachers in the Israeli elementary school, this study focuses on five teachers. These teachers were selected as case studies since they are recognised to be effective in their practice and thus contrast with the many teachers in the same context considered to be less so. As such, the cases selected are clear examples of purposive sampling. The criteria and procedure for the selection of teachers as cases are presented in Appendix 1. At this point, it is pertinent

to highlight the clearly defined and bounded nature of the cases as prerequisites for case study inquiry.

3.4.3 The Bounded Nature of the Cases at the Focus of this Study

Merriam (1998:27/28) notes that in order to qualify as a case, the phenomenon to be studied must be intrinsically bounded. While determining the boundaries of a case may be challenging (Anderson 1998:153, Creswell 2007:76, Yin 2003:22), 'Without some notion of a *boundary*, it becomes impossible to state what the case is.' (Denscombe 2007:44). Hence defining the boundaries of what is to be studied in terms of what may be 'fence(d) in' (Merriam 1998:27) is of prime consideration when embarking upon case study research.

Creswell (2007:73) notes that the boundaries of the case may be determined by such factors as the setting or context, the time allocated and the events focused upon. Merriam (1998:28) highlights a useful technique to aid in assessing the 'boundedness' of a topic or phenomenon – that is the extent to which it lends itself to being a clearly bounded case for study, in suggesting that the researcher considers how finite the data collection could be i.e. 'whether there is a limit to the number of people involved who could be interviewed or a finite amount of time for observations.' Merriam (1998:28) goes on to note that if there is no limit- either 'actually or theoretically' the phenomenon in question would not be sufficiently bounded to be considered as a case. While such perceptions were made primarily in relation to single case studies, they are also applicable to multiple case studies, and were therefore taken into consideration when selecting the cases for the multiple case study at the focus of this discussion.

In highlighting the criteria for the selection of cases in this study, the bounded nature of the cases will be illustrated in the ensuing section. This

will be followed by a description of the cases themselves- the five teachers at the focus of the study. In addition, while factors relating to the schools and their populations in which these teachers work were not taken into consideration when selecting the teachers, a brief insight into these factors is considered important.

3.4.4 Criteria for the Selection of the Cases Studied

The consideration of three criteria determined the purposive sampling of and boundaries for the cases for the focus of this study. The first criterion, sectorial considerations, reflects the complex multi-cultural society of Israel. The second criterion- geographical factors, concerns practical considerations, while the third aspect – the quality of teaching, relates to pedagogically oriented considerations. Each of these criteria will be discussed in turn.

Sectorial Considerations

The Ministry of Education in Israel is a centrally-controlled national body based in Jerusalem. The whole country is divided into districts for the purpose of organising and attending to more localized educational needs, whereby each district is managed, albeit under the jurisdiction of the central office, by a District Manager. In light of the multi-cultural nature of Israeli society, there are also sectorial divisions that operate within some of the regional divisions. The northern region in which this researcher works is a particularly prominent example.

Responsibility for English teaching and learning in the north is under the auspices of three Regional Inspectors- one in the Arab sector, a second in the Druze and Bedouin sectors and a third - this researcher, responsible for English education in both secular and religious schools in the Jewish sector. In acknowledging cultural differences between the sectors that also manifest themselves in an educational framework, the initial boundary to this study

was thus determined by sector. This consideration was based upon the premise that, in order to gain insight that would best serve the professional needs of this researcher, the teachers selected as cases to be studied should teach in schools in the Jewish sector.

Geographical Considerations

The second consideration in determining the boundaries of the cases involves geographical location. Permission for access into schools and subsequently classrooms was initially obtained, in accordance with the Ministry of Education regulations, through the Office of the Chief Scientist. In order to prevent any potential embarrassment or discomfort for a teacher in a school under the jurisdiction of this investigator as the Regional Inspector for English, permission was granted to conduct this research in schools in regions other than the northern district of the Ministry of Education.

Denscombe (2007:41) notes that 'Although researchers should never rely on practical reasons as the principal or sole criterion for selecting a case, it would be naïve to ignore the fact that in the real world of research, such factors do have a bearing on the selection of cases.' Hence, being obliged to focus the research beyond the borders of the northern region, this researcher, for purely practical reasons- including available time for and cost of traveling, approached the then-Inspector for English in a suitably accessible region. At a later stage, having exhausted the list of teachers initially recommended by the Inspector in that area as described below, the Inspector in the next most suitably accessible region was approached for further recommendations as necessary. The Regional Inspectors thus served as what Wellington (2003:64) terms as the 'contact points' –the initial link to names of teachers as potential cases for the study. The procedure to determine which teachers within the above-mentioned sectorial and

geographical boundaries would be invited to serve as cases was further defined by a third boundary - the quality of instruction.

The Quality of Instruction

In order to learn which teachers would be potential candidates as cases for the study based on the quality of their practice, the Regional Inspector of the first suitable district was asked initially for recommendations in a face-to-face conversation. She obliged instantly with the names and contact details of teachers considered suitable, based on the criteria mentioned earlier. It should be noted that one teacher suggested was previously known to and thus rejected by this researcher for ethical reasons as described later. At a later stage, since insufficient suitable candidates for the purpose of this study were available in this region, the same procedure took place with the Regional Inspector for English in the second region as referred to above. Hence it is clear that, as this researcher can also verify from her own experience and familiarity with the field, teachers recognised to engage in effective practice are particularly prominent in their local regions and limited in number. As such an infinite list of effective teachers that one could recommend for the purpose of this research does not exist.

Merriam (1998:28) points out that in order to be recognised as a case there must be a finite number of people suited to the criteria set. In taking this perception into consideration, the cases for the purpose of this study have clearly defined boundaries determined by sector, geographical location and the quality of instruction, and are, as shown above, limited in number in light of these considerations. The overall process for the purposeful selection of the specific teachers within these boundaries who served as cases was conducted according to the procedure summarised in the table in Appendix 1.

While the teachers approached were recommended according to the criteria listed in Appendix 1, the teachers themselves, of course, had the final say in whether they would serve as participants in this study or not. As such, the researcher first made telephone contact with each teacher in turn, offering a full explanation of the study, in order to obtain their permission to be studied as cases. All five teachers gave their consent instantly and willingly.

Before describing the on-site procedures for data collection, the following section of this discussion will present the professional profile of the teachers and relevant information pertaining to the schools and their populations.

3.4.5 The Teachers

The five teachers selected as cases work in four different schools- three of the teachers each in separate schools and two teachers in the same school. All the teachers are appropriately qualified with a teaching certificate and a first degree. One teacher has a Master's degree. The length of teaching experience ranges from 10-27 years. While this is a wide range, it is interesting to note that none of the teachers are in the early stage of their teaching careers. All but one of the teachers has had, or currently has, additional responsibilities within the school or the broader field of English teaching beyond the school. This in itself is a declaration of appreciation of the quality of the work of the teacher by such as School Principals, Inspectors and the wider English teaching community, although not all teachers considered effective either have such opportunities or choose to take them. The professional profiles of the teachers are summarised in the table in Appendix 2.

3.4.6 The Schools and their Populations

The information offered in this section in relation to the schools and their populations that feature in this study is a combination of the insights presented by the teachers and general knowledge of the researcher.

The first two schools are situated in different areas of the same city and the pupils are from the respective local neighborhoods. The population in School A includes many immigrant pupils from Ethiopia, Russia and Georgia of a low socio-economic background. As such they do not have the opportunity to supplement their education with the private lessons that are popular in many areas in Israel. In School B the pupils are from a mixed poor-to-average socio-economic background whereby most families are unable to provide supplementary private lessons.

School C is situated in a kibbutz and the population comprises pupils from the kibbutz itself, a nearby moshav, (another form of a small communal Israeli settlement), and some small towns in the area. Kibbutz schools in Israel are generally regarded as offering better education than many city schools that serve the local neighborhoods. As such a number of the pupils from local towns attend this school as a result of dissatisfaction with the local school from which they have 'dropped out' - as cited by the English teacher concerned. Many pupils in School C are from an average socio-economic background and are afforded the opportunity of supplementary private English lessons. School D, in which two of the teachers in this study work as colleagues, is situated in a fairly new neighborhood of a different city. The pupils are all from a middle-to-high socio-economic background and, according to the insights gained from the English teachers, many are known to have private English lessons. The information offered here is summarised in the table in Appendix 3.

It can be seen that the schools and their populations at the centre of this study exhibit differences. It is important to note that, while it may be possible to associate the higher-than-average levels of achievement (used as one criterion for selection as described in the table in Appendix 1), in part at least, with the supplementary English lessons likely to have been received by pupils from two of the schools on a private basis as referred to above, this factor is not relevant to all the schools in question. Since the results of standardised tests were just one of the variables used to identify teachers for the purpose of this study, the possibility that pupils have extra tuition in English was not considered an issue in the selection of teachers for the purpose of this study.

3.5 Data Collection

Merriam (1998:69) states that 'Data are nothing more than ordinary bits and pieces of information found in the environment. They can be concrete and measurable, as in class attendance, or visible and difficult to measure, as in feelings'. Dey (1993:15) notes that any '“data”, regardless of method, are in fact 'produced' by the researcher,' since '“Collecting” data always involves selecting data'. This fitting perception is confirmed by Merriam (1998:69) who states that 'Whether or not a bit of information becomes data in a research study depends solely on the interest and perspective of the investigator.'

However, while the data collected are inevitably subject to some degree of researcher preference, in order to select the data that will subsequently be of relevance to the findings of the study, it is necessary to initially undergo the process of data collection in its broader sense: that is acquiring a bank of information from which the relevant data will be finally drawn. The following section, in considering the organisational procedures and the methods and

instruments used, describes how the data that formed the initial bank of information for the purpose of this study were collected.

3.5.1 Organisational Procedures for the Collection of Data

The process of data collection for this study took place over the period of one academic year. During this time visits to 26 lessons given by five teachers in four different schools were made, whereby between four and six lessons given by each teacher were observed. In three of the four schools involved, the visits took place over consecutive weeks, after which the researcher moved on to focus on the next teacher in the next school. In School D, where two teachers who participated as cases in this study worked, observations were conducted during each visit in the classes of both teachers.

The rationale for this largely consecutive procedure was based on practical considerations. Making arrangements for visits over a relatively intensive period enabled: a) regular confirmation in the event of changes in the teachers' timetable and, if necessary, b) the possibility to reschedule in the reasonably near future, and c) continuity in keeping track of data and following through on themes on the part of the researcher. Nonetheless, despite efforts to conduct the fieldwork in each school over an intensive period, the number of visits, the number of lessons observed and the time span over which these took place inevitably varied between schools and teachers. There were two main reasons for such variations.

Firstly, pre-planned events sometimes occurred during the relevant period that prevented regular classes taking place. Such instances included a school ceremony to mark the anniversary of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a school trip and religious holidays. The second consideration involved the teachers' timetables. Although learning English takes place in the early grades in many schools (Grades 1-3, age 6-9 respectively), the

Israeli Ministry of Education deems it compulsory to do so only from Grade 4 – age 10. As such the researcher felt it appropriate to focus the research from Grade 4 to the final year of elementary school education in Israel - Grade 6, with pupils aged 10-12. Hence, although an average school day comprises 6-8 single lesson slots, some of the teachers at the focus of this study also taught English in the lower grades, therefore leaving limited opportunities to observe the relevant grades on a given day. In another instance, the teacher taught only the first two lessons of the day, and then went on to her work in a college on the day of the week that the researcher was able to visit her classes. The observations in such cases necessarily took place over a longer time span than they might have done otherwise.

3.5.2 Methods of Data Collection

The two main methods of data collection used in this study were observations and interviews conducted by the researcher, thereby adhering to Merriam's (1998:7) perception whereby the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection in qualitative studies. The following section will examine each method in turn in relation to the study at the focus of this discussion.

Classroom Observations

The perception of Burton et al (2008:95) that 'Observation can be one of the most powerful tools in research' is largely reflected throughout the qualitative research literature as recognition of the view that it (observation) '...is especially helpful in providing deep, rich data that provide verisimilitude to the research process' (Burton et al 2008:97). Goldhaber and Anthony (2007:134) go so far as to say that '...it remains an open question as to whether it is even possible to judge teachers' effectiveness using measures other than direct observations of their teaching.' Hence, observation is recognised as a key tool in qualitative research studies, since it provides

insight into classroom events as they occur in real time. As such, classroom observations feature prominently in this study.

While the above-mentioned perspective is relevant to observation in general, differences in the type of tools used to record information during observation are frequently referred to in the relevant literature. The ensuing discussion will relate to some of the main differences while placing the observations used in this research within the framework of the possible variations.

Observation in this Study

The most commonly cited types of observation range from more to less structured variations. (See Burton et al 2008:98, Hopkins, 2002:82, Robson 2003:310, Wellington 2003:95). In differentiating between the levels of structure, Burton et al (2008:98) note that in highly-structured observations the categories for observation are pre-determined, in semi-structured observations the main issues to be explored will have been worked out beforehand so that the researcher will have a 'clear conception of what it is they wish to observe, ' whereas in the unstructured observation 'The researcher will have only a generalized conception of what is to be observed, probably relating to an overall research theme or issue.' The nature of the type of observation employed is reflected in the tool used to record the information gleaned through observation.

Information collected through more structured observations is likely to be recorded on a tool that lists the predetermined categories for observation and/or the intervals at which the observations should be noted. In comparison, in conducting an unstructured observation, the researcher '...literally uses a blank sheet of paper to record the lesson ..., (and) either notes down key points about the lesson or uses a personal form of shorthand for making a verbatim recording of classroom transactions..., ' (Hopkins

2002:85). In the attempt to provide insight into the research question at the focus of this study as referred to above, it is the description of the unstructured observation that bears closest resemblance to the nature of observation conducted in this research.

While the paper was not entirely blank, the tool used in this study (Appendix 4) was based on the format used by this researcher when conducting classroom observations in the professional capacity of Regional Inspector for English. The format provides an open-ended framework that enabled the researcher to record the time at frequent, although not pre-determined, intervals, while noting the nature of activities, organizational aspects and teacher and pupil utterances and interactions as they occurred. This entailed constant and speedy written recording of events in coded and short-hand forms in order to capture as much activity as possible as it unfolded throughout the observations. The information gathered was written up soon after the observations in a more comprehensible form, while it was still fresh in the mind of the researcher (see example in Appendix 5). In conducting the observations, the researcher took notes while sitting at the back of the class in order to gain maximum perspective of the ongoing classroom activity, thereby adopting the role of 'observer-as-nonparticipant, where the researcher takes no part in the activity whatsoever, although their role is known throughout.' (Robson 2003:311). Hence the observations were conducted within what Robson (2003:311) further defines as an 'unobtrusive observation approach'.

Although as Cohen et al (2000:314) point out, 'observation frequently claims neutrality by being non-interventionist,' all forms of observation are subject, to a greater or lesser extent, to the observer's judgment regarding intentionality and subsequent interpretation (Cohen et al 2000:315). Hence, in aiming to minimize potentially limited assumptions Robson's (2003:310)

perception whereby 'Data from direct observation contrasts with, and can often usefully complement, information obtained by virtually any other technique' is pertinent. To this end, as also highlighted later in reference to triangulation, interviews were employed in this study as a further method of data collection to supplement the information gathered through direct classroom observations.

Interviews

Robson (2003:272) describes the interview as 'a flexible and adaptable way of finding things out', further noting that 'The human use of language is fascinating both as a behavior in its own right, and for the virtually unique window that it opens on what lies behind our actions.' As such, 'interviewing allows a researcher to investigate and prompt things that we cannot observe. We can probe an interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives' (Wellington 2003:71).

As with other methods for data collection, the literature relates to various types of interview. One such 'commonly used typology' (Robson 2003:269) refers to the 'degree of structure' (Wellington 2003:74), ranging from the more to less structured interview (see for example Opie 2004, Robson 2003, Wellington 2003), not unlike the method of observation as described above. The highly structured interview format leaves little room for the expansion of ideas beyond direct responses to the pre-determined questions posed, and is therefore usually associated with a more positivist approach to research. The unstructured interview, at the other end of the range, is open-ended and conducted more as a conversation. The semi-structured interview, in comparison, may be seen as a compromise between these two positions (Wellington 2003: 74).

Opie (2004:118) defines the semi-structured interview as 'a more flexible version of the structured interview which ... allow(s) for a depth of feeling to be ascertained by providing opportunities to probe and expand the interviewee's responses. It also allows for deviation from a prearranged text and to change the wording of the questions or the order in which they were asked.' Robson (2003:278) confirms this perspective in relating to the semi-structured interview as comprising 'a shopping list of topics ...(to which interviewers) want to get responses ..., but they have considerable freedom in the sequencing of questions, in their exact wording, and in the amount of time and attention given to the different topics.' As such the semi-structured interview, while making 'provision for negotiation, discussion and expansion of the interviewee's responses ...' also serves to 'impose an overall shape to the interview and help prevent endless rambling' (Opie 2004:118). It is this perception that underlies the semi-structured nature of the interviews conducted in the framework of this enquiry.

Interviews in this Study

The interviews in this study were conducted at each site with two different sets of participants and at three different stages of the investigation, thereby serving as a means of gaining insight into what underlies key aspects of the activity recorded in the preceding classroom observations.

Pupils participating in the lessons observed were interviewed initially. The questions intended to form the basis of these interviews (Appendix 6) were derived with the intention of gaining insight into how pupils perceived the tasks they were required to do in the lesson observed. These interviews were conducted during parts of the lesson where pupils were involved in individualised work, so as not to cause disruption to the lesson. This procedure was in accordance with permission received from the Ministry of Education's Chief Scientists' Office in response to the required official request

submitted for permission to conduct this research in a State school. However, there was almost no opportunity for in-depth interviews under these circumstances. Hence the information gleaned was insufficient to contribute to the findings.

Two subsequent sets of interviews took place with the teachers at different stages after observations had been conducted. Although pre-lesson insights from the teachers may have been useful – either in written or spoken form, it was felt that asking teachers to engage in such time-consuming activity in addition to the two sets of interviews described below and considered indispensable, would be unreasonable. The first set of teacher interviews was conducted with each teacher at the end of each day during which observations took place, in relation to the lessons observed. The interviews were held, for the most part, face-to-face, although occasional follow-up telephone interviews were held where necessary. They were based on questions posed by the researcher as a starting point for discussion (see Appendix 7), designed to gain insight into two main aspects.

The first three questions invited the teachers to reflect on the lesson in light of their planning and execution overall and provided the opportunity for the researcher to follow through on issues that came up that she had not considered previously. The remaining questions were tailored to relate to observed activity within a specific lesson. These questions were posed to determine the extent to which key aspects of authentic instruction, identified in the literature review as contributing to enhanced educational achievement, featured in the rationale of each teacher's practice. The activation of prior knowledge for example, is identified as being integral to the facilitation of knowledge construction- a key facet of authenticity in instruction. Hence, following observations of this practice in the two lessons in the first visit, Teacher 1 was asked in relation to Question 6, 'Do you tend to include the

practice of relating back to own experience and prior knowledge in your lessons on a regular basis? Why?’ Responses to such questions invariably, as in this case, led to an in-depth discussion about the particular issue raised.

The final set of interviews was conducted again with each teacher in turn following analysis of the data, thereby relating to specific issues for each teacher that came up after the categories had been established. (See example in Appendix 8). The purpose of these interviews was twofold. Firstly in confirming the prominent practices as observed, interpreted and listed by the researcher, the teachers’ responses served as respondent validation in accordance with Simons’ (2010:131) perspective whereby ‘Respondent validation refers to checking the accuracy, adequacy and fairness of observations, representations and interpretations of experience with those whom they concern.’ Secondly, this series of interviews enabled the researcher to gain insight into the rationale and concerns behind the prominent practices that arose from the analysis of the data collected.

This section has described how the data was collected in this study. Specific details regarding dates, classes observed and respondents interviewed are shown in the table in Appendix 11.

3.5.3 Piloting

It is generally accepted that piloting methods and tools for data collection is advisable in order to identify and iron out any potential flaws. It was intended that the observations conducted in the classroom of the first teacher in this study, together with the post lesson interviews, would serve this purpose. However, after conducting the study of the first case and compiling a rich source of data over a significant time period, this researcher felt that not using this data would have been a waste of valuable information since, as noted earlier, the number of suitable cases is limited. As such, the

information gleaned from Teacher 1 (presented in the next chapter) has been included in, and is integral to, the overall findings of this study. It should also be noted that the same tools and procedures, having proved suited to the purpose in light of the experience in the case of Teacher 1, were used to collect data in the subsequent cases.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

Merriam (1998:178) succinctly describes data analysis 'as the process of making sense out of the data.' In extending this perspective, Corbin and Strauss (2008:57) maintain that 'Analysis is a process of generating, developing, and verifying concepts- a process that builds over time and with the acquisition of data.' To do so, necessitates the coding and categorising of the data as it is examined. Thus, while Merriam's (1998:180) claim that 'Category construction *is* data analysis...', may be considered an over-simplification, it undoubtedly highlights a key perception in much of the relevant literature.

Wellington (2003:142) notes that categories used in data analysis may be established in three main ways. Pre-established or a priori categories may be taken from a previous study and are therefore determined before the data are collected, whereas a posteriori categories are derived from the data in the on-going collection and analysis processes. The third way in which categories of data may be formed is identified by Wellington (2003:142) as the combination of both the a priori and a posteriori categories. In this instance, 'Existing categories, derived from past research and previous literature, can be brought to the data and used to make sense of it. ' and combined with 'new data which require new thought and new categorization....' It is this process of establishing categories that is 'probably the most common and ...rational' of the three possibilities (Wellington 2003:142) and the way in which it occurred in this study.

3.7 Analysing the Data in this Study

From the initial stages of data collection from the practice of Teacher 1, it became apparent that considerable emphasis was placed on making connections between the content of the lesson and pupils' prior knowledge and experiences. In acknowledging this emerging and subsequent on-going pattern, the researcher simultaneously pursued pertinent literature. This led to an appreciation of the relevance of aspects of authenticity in instruction considered crucial to learning as identified in Newmann et al's (1996) model of authentic pedagogy and subsequent related research as described in the literature review. These aspects informed and ultimately led to the formation of the categories that emerged in analysing the data collected for this study. (See Figure 1).

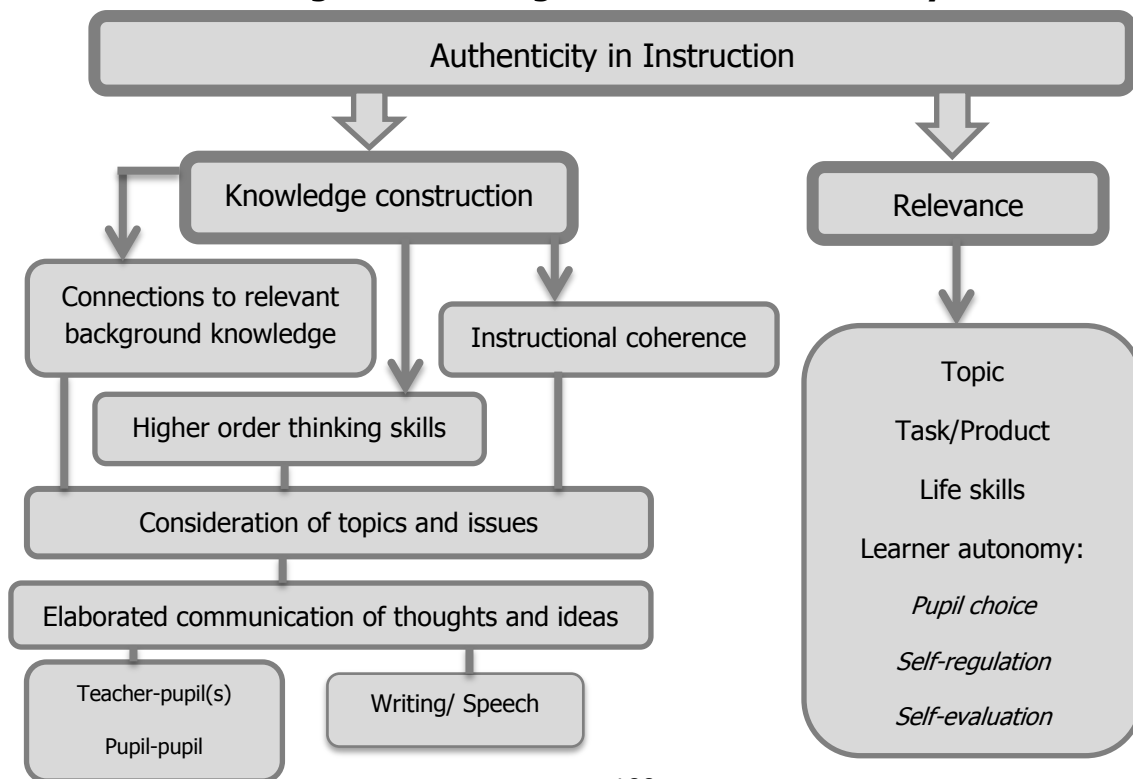
As will be recalled, Newmann et al (1996) highlight Disciplined Inquiry as one of three distinct components of authentic pedagogy. However, in the course of this enquiry it became clear that such in-depth inquiry, promoted by the consideration of topics and issues through elaborated communication, served to facilitate pupils' construction of knowledge. The notion of Disciplined Inquiry through elaborated communication is thus related to in this study within the practice of making provision for knowledge construction. The categories used in analysing the data are therefore presented under two main headings rather than the three originally suggested by Newmann et al (1996), as illustrated in Figure 1.

Corbin and Strauss (2008:58) claim that researchers employ analytic tools or mental strategies in coding and categorising data – whether they are conscious of their use at the time or not. The data collected in this study were coded using one of the most frequently used analytical tools according to Corbin and Strauss (2008:73) – making constant comparisons between segments of data. In doing so, as Corbin and Strauss (2008:73) further

explain, 'the researcher moves along with analysis, (as) each incident in the data is compared with other incidents for similarities and differences.' As such, in examining each of the classroom events and the utterances of teacher and pupils recorded in observations and referred to in interviews, this researcher either placed each information item into an existing category that had emerged previously in the process, or established a new category to accommodate the data as appropriate.

Throughout the analysis process, organising the data into categories was greatly facilitated by the development of diagrams as 'conceptual visualisations of data ... (that) ... help to raise the researcher's thinking out of the level of facts. Diagrams enable researchers to organise their data, keep a record of their concepts and the relationships between them, and to integrate their ideas.' (Corbin and Strauss 2008:124). The diagram below (Figure 1) was fashioned to show the themes and categories, and the relationships between them that emerged during the course of data analysis in this study to serve this very purpose.

Figure 1 Categories Used in Data Analysis



3.8 Credibility of the Research

Merriam (1998:198) points out that 'Being able to trust research results is especially important in applied fields, such as education, in which practitioners intervene in other people's lives. No classroom teacher, for example, will want to experiment with a new way of doing things without some confidence in its potential success.' It is in light of this perception that the credibility or 'trustworthiness' (Merriam 1998:199) of research must be given prime consideration in the planning, execution and analysis of research in the educational context. The next sections of this account describe how the aspects of validity, reliability and ethical conduct as integral to the notion of credibility were accommodated within this study.

3.8.1 Validity

In relation to case study research, Simons (2010:127) explains that 'Validity is concerned with how to establish warrant for your work; whether it is sound, defensible, coherent, well-grounded, appropriate to the case...' The relevant literature relates to different types of validity, of which two are of particular concern to this study: internal and external validity.

Internal Validity

Merriam (1998:201) states that 'Internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality.' In probing this perspective she raises questions that must be asked about the research: 'Do the findings capture what is really there? Are investigators observing or measuring what they think they are measuring?' Cohen et al (2000:107) approach the issue of internal validity from what may be seen as a different angle that implies the difficulty of attaining such objectivity. They reason that 'Internal validity seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data'

(Cohen et al, 2000:107). Either way, the understanding that the findings of the study should be supported from as many perspectives as possible in order to maximize their validation is apparent. The relevant literature determines that there are different ways of doing so.

Merriam (1998:204) cites several strategies that may be used to enhance internal validity, of which three are pertinent to this study. Firstly she recommends the use of member checking (referred to earlier as respondent validity). Secondly Merriam (1998:204) notes that 'gathering data over a period of time (is likely to) to increase the validity of the findings.' While Merriam does not specify the length of time, it is reasonable to assume that the implication is that conducting all the observations in one visit does not contribute to maximum internal validity. In this study, as will be recalled, the observations in the classes of each teacher were spread out over several visits which took place over a number of weeks. The third strategy for internally validating findings is triangulation.

Triangulation

Simons (2010:129) describes triangulation as 'a means of cross-checking the relevance and significance of issues or testing out arguments and perspectives from different angles.' As such triangulation strategies aim to provide 'cross-data validity checks' (Patton 1999:1192) in order to minimize 'systematic bias in the data' (Patton 1999:1197) that may emerge as a result of 'findings (that) are simply an artifact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator's biases' (Patton 1999:1197). Triangulation may thus be viewed as 'a test for consistency' (Patton 1999:1193) in the effort to verify the credibility of the research findings. There are several types of triangulation, the most relevant of which to this study is that of methodological triangulation.

Wellington (2003: 24) notes that methodological triangulation in research may be used in two ways. The first – ‘“within method” triangulation (involves) ...the same method used (to collect data) on different occasions.’ In this study within method triangulation was conducted in different instances. Firstly, as described earlier, observations were conducted over the course of several months in 4-6 lessons given by each of the five teachers. Secondly, as also highlighted earlier, two sets of interviews were conducted with the teachers during the study. The first set – post-lesson interviews, were conducted following and in relation to the specific lessons observed (see Appendix 7). A second set of interviews, the post-analysis interviews, was conducted with each teacher in turn after the data from the observations and first set of interviews had been analysed. In this case, the key themes that had been identified in the analysis to that point formed the basis for discussion, in the attempt to determine a) the extent of this researcher’s accuracy in her perceptions and b) the teacher’s pedagogical considerations underlying her practice. (See example in Appendix 8).

The second aspect of methodological triangulation as identified by Wellington (2003:24) is that of ‘between method’ ...when different methods are used in relation to the same object of study.’ This form of triangulation manifests itself in this study through the use of observations and interviews as highlighted above, whereby the data collected through both of these methods were cross-analysed in efforts to verify the findings as perceived by this researcher. Examples of evidence from the observations and two rounds of interviews at different stages of the data collection process are highlighted in the discussion of the findings in Chapter 4.

External validity

Yin (2003:37) refers to external validity as ‘...knowing whether a study’s findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study.’ In qualitative

research study, and single case study in particular, the generalisability of findings in the quest to further knowledge is of significant concern, since, as noted earlier, such inquiry is highly contextualised. Hence the observation that: 'Critics (of case study) state that single cases offer a poor basis for generalizing.' (Yin 2003:37). The decision to adopt a multi-case approach to this study as an accepted strategy for enhancing generalisation (Merriam 1998:211), thereby increasing the possibility of generating conclusions that may be applied to a wider audience- such as English teachers in secondary schools or elementary school teachers of other subjects in the Israeli school system, was founded in this perspective.

3.8.2 Reliability

The literature relates to the issue of reliability in different ways, perhaps as a result of the contentious nature of the term (Wellington 2003:31) and its implications. Yin (2003:37) for example notes that to show the reliability of a study, thereby minimizing potential errors and biases (as with validation processes), necessitates arriving at the same conclusions by conducting the same case study following the same procedures at a later stage. The interpretation of Wellington (2003:31) recognises the element of replicability as inherent to reliability, whereby 'a piece of research can be copied or replicated in order to give the same results in a different context with different researchers.' This view is echoed by Cohen et al (2000:117) who goes so far as to state that replicability is a synonym for reliability. Hence it can be seen that the understanding of the notion of reliability varies in the literature, and it is perhaps Cohen et al's (2000:117) further perception that consistency in findings is a central facet of reliability that is most helpful. This however, prompts an additional consideration.

Le Compte and Preissle (1994:3320, cited by Wellington, 2003:31) determine that attaining complete reliability 'poses an impossible task for any researcher

studying naturalistic behavior...' since such research is open to the interpretations of the researcher. Hence, while the ideal would clearly be complete reliability in the findings, qualitative studies (and increasingly recognised to be so in scientifically oriented research, as pointed out by Wellington 2003:31), cannot offer such guarantee. Despite this acknowledgment however, and in recognition of the need to maintain reliability as far as possible within the confines of the particular study, it should be noted that efforts to offer some measure of reliability are founded in the fact that the same procedures, methods of data collection and analysis were employed in all the cases at the focus of this study.

3.8.3 Ethical Considerations

In order to maintain required ethical standards, relevant issues must be addressed in all research design. If in the physical sciences, which examine inanimate objects, the ethical considerations are important (Wellington 2003:54), the need to 'ensure the ethical conduct of researchers is 'multiplied in (the social sciences and therefore) educational research, where people are studying people.' (Wellington 2003:54).

Ethical issues may arise at different stages of the research process, and while, in some instances, may be open to interpretation, there are conditions that must be considered and guidelines to be upheld. This section will focus on those of greatest significance to this study. These concern the importance of no previous acquaintance with the teachers, attaining initial permission for access to the site and fulfilling the responsibilities of the researcher.

No Previous Acquaintance

Despite the limited choice of suitable teachers as noted earlier, the context in which this study is placed posed a particular ethical consideration in the selection of teachers for this study. The Jewish EFL teacher and teacher

educator network in Israel is compact. Teachers from around the country are often acquainted with each other through professional gatherings such as conferences, courses and online forums, or through serving in overlapping or parallel capacities. This researcher, as noted previously, serves as both Inspector for English for the Ministry of Education, and lecturer and pedagogical counselor in a teacher training college.

One teacher, in addition to those who eventually participated in the study, was suggested by the relevant Regional English Inspector at that time (according to the procedure detailed in Appendix 1). However, this researcher had had prior contact with this teacher, having been present in her classroom through her work with student English teachers. As such, despite the more convenient geographical location of the school where this teacher works than some of the other schools involved in the study, in order to maintain strict ethical and therefore professional standards that may, albeit unwittingly, be threatened as a result of familiarity or pre-conceived ideas concerning teaching skills, it was considered inappropriate to include the practice of this teacher, or indeed any other known to the researcher, in the study.

Initial Permission

Initial permission to conduct this research in state schools was gained from the Chief Scientist's Office of the Ministry of Education as mentioned earlier. Having identified the teachers as potential cases, the permission of each School Principal was then sought, the teachers' consent gained, and a copy of the research outline (Appendix 9) and terms of the agreement as drawn up by the Chief Scientist's Office (Appendix 10) presented to Principal and/or teacher as requested.

Responsibilities of the Researcher

BERA (2011), in referring to the responsibilities of the researcher throughout the research procedure, offers clear and helpful guidelines. Those of relevance to this study were adhered to. These include responsibility to the participants and to the community of educational researchers.

Responsibility to the Participants

Practices adhering to several issues concerning the responsibility to the participants were administered. Firstly, the issue of informed consent of the participants may be seen as crucial in determining the nature and course of this study. Some studies within the realm of TER have been conducted on what were identified as both low and high performing teachers, for example Pressley et al (1998). Such an approach renders rich possibilities to identify effective instructional practices in comparison to ineffective practices. However, in recognizing the ethical obligation to uphold the notion of informed consent, this researcher felt it inappropriate to inform potential participants that they had been selected as cases due to their unsatisfactory performance as teachers. As such all the participants selected were those identified as effective teachers according to the criteria mentioned earlier.

The purpose of the research was stated and the process explained to each teacher in turn. The fact that the teacher had been selected on merit of her professional success and, as such, this researcher was not there to judge the quality of the teaching as this judgment had already been made by the teacher's superiors- but rather to find out what she does in the classroom that warrants that judgment- was emphasised. At all stages the observations and interviews were set up with the agreement and at the convenience of the teachers. The purpose of the researcher's presence in class was explained to the pupils. The interviews with individual pupils, took place with their consent during the time in lessons when they were asked to work independently. The

pupils interviewed were selected randomly and spontaneously. They were asked if they would mind being interrupted for a few minutes, answering some questions and having their responses recorded in writing as they spoke. One pupil approached in School A, who, unknown to the researcher at the time, was experiencing difficulties in learning English, did not want to respond. The researcher assured her that this was perfectly acceptable, and proceeded to interview another pupil. All the other pupils approached responded willingly. In accordance with directions from the Chief Scientist of the Ministry of Education in Israel, it was not necessary to attain parental consent to interview pupils within the framework of the lesson.

Secondly, in the final set of teacher interviews, the teachers were asked to confirm or reject the findings highlighted by the researcher as a result of analysing the data, as mentioned previously. This practice is perceived as being compatible with the guidelines of BERA (2011:8) whereby it is considered 'good practice for researchers to debrief participants at the conclusion of the research.' Thirdly, all participants were thanked at relevant stages – be it in person, by telephone or by email. Finally, in the effort to maintain anonymity, the names of the teachers and the schools and their precise locations have been coded in this report.

Responsibility to the Community of Educational Researchers

In accordance with the guidelines set out by BERA (2011) as a responsibility to the community of educational researchers, this researcher has been careful to analyse the data, represent and report the findings according to her interpretations without falsifying or distorting them in any way, in the endeavour to 'protect the integrity and reputation of educational research by ensuring ... (that I) conduct(ed) ... (my) research to the highest standards' (BERA 2011).

3.9 Summary

In presenting a detailed account of the design of and procedures employed in this study, this chapter has determined that the multiple case study, in providing opportunity for in-depth examination of the practice of a number of teachers using different methods and tools, was best suited to investigating the issue at hand. In the course of execution, all required conventions and acceptable procedures that contribute to a sound study were adhered to. The themes and subsequent categories identified in the review of the relevant literature formed the basis for analysing and interpreting the data gathered in this study, and recorded in Figure 1, thereby leading to the findings for each case in turn and the subsequent cross-analysis of all five cases. These are discussed in the ensuing chapters.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

Although the 'hallmark of qualitative research is that it goes beyond *how much* there is of something ...' Miles and Huberman (1984:215) also point out that '...there is a lot of counting going on when judgments of quality are being made. When we identify a theme or pattern, we are isolating something (a) that happens a number of times and (b) that consistently happens in a specific way. The 'number of times' and consistency judgments are based on counting.' Hence the notion of 'Counting' as one technique that may be used to generate meaning from data collected through qualitative procedures (Miles and Huberman 1984:215).

While, as discussed earlier, this is not a quantitative study, in considering it an appropriate way of determining 'what's there' (Miles and Huberman 1984:215), thereby identifying the most frequently employed instructional practices, those that emerged in the course of data collection and analysis were counted and classified as occurring under one of the following headings:

- Frequently – used at least once, and often several times, in at least half of the lessons observed
- Infrequently- used in less than half of the lessons observed
- Not used at all

Classification according to the number of times each practice occurred overall was also considered. However, based on the understanding that educational achievements are best attained through an ongoing learning process, the notion of frequency as opposed to number was considered of more value in identifying the prominent practices likely to serve this purpose. In classifying the frequency of the practices used by each teacher on the table shown in

Appendix 12, a visual representation of the extent to which each practice was employed was immediately available, with those featuring in the 'Frequently' category recognised as the most prominent pedagogical practices used by each of the teachers in this study.

This chapter presents the instructional practices employed most frequently by each teacher. Before embarking on this endeavour however, two important issues must be considered. Firstly, a brief reference to pupil engagement within the lessons observed is necessary. The second issue concerns clarification of the concepts and terminology used in describing the findings and how they relate to the categories that emerged. While many of those that will be referred to were discussed in the literature review, it is considered pertinent to offer clarification of certain terms as used in this study.

4.2 Pupil Engagement in this Study

As discussed in the literature review, in order for meaningful learning to occur, instructional practices must foster pupils' procedural and substantive engagement. Since learning is recognised to take place in the classes of the teachers observed, it was taken as a given that pupils would be sufficiently and suitably engaged, and, as such, the extent to which pupils were engaged was not examined or recorded during observations. It is, however, worthwhile mentioning that, while it is difficult to measure levels of engagement through observation only, there were isolated instances when it was clear that not all pupils were engaged in the activity. These instances were swiftly diffused by the teacher. At all other times, pupils participated and therefore displayed some level of engagement in classroom activity.

4.3 Clarification of Terminology

The practices discussed in the ensuing sections under the heading of 'Making Connections' refer to those that offer pupils the opportunity to activate or establish relevant prior knowledge as a prerequisite to the focus of instruction

at that time, based on the assumption that without such prior knowledge, learners will have difficulty in constructing new knowledge. The nature of 'Making Connections' is two-fold, in that both how the teacher facilitates the making of connections to prior knowledge and the content referred to in doing so are considered. Put simply, the aspect of 'Making Connections' examines both the 'how' and the 'what'.

Practices that promote 'Higher Order Thinking Skills' refer to those that encourage the application of prior knowledge in new situations through such as inferring, reasoning and explaining, that demand the ability to think beyond the basic skills of knowing and comprehending.

The heading of 'Instructional Coherence' incorporates those practices that promote learning through logical and cohesive steps. These include: the extent to which lessons observed focus on a limited number of topics, continuity and coherence throughout the lesson, and the scaffolding of instruction in order to provide step-by-step support for learning as needed.

'Spoken interaction' is used to refer to the practice of allowing pupils to share and develop ideas and opinions rather than merely answering questions with pre-conceived correct/incorrect responses. This practice in the lessons observed was conducted exclusively through discussion between the teacher and members of the class as a whole.

Practices under the heading of 'Learner Autonomy' concern the opportunities provided by the teacher that enable pupils themselves to make decisions and take actions that influence their learning. These include offering choice in activity or in the quantity of work undertaken, promoting the self-management of time in completing predetermined tasks, and encouraging pupils' self-assessment of the quality of the work they produce.

The final category of prominent practices that emerged in this study is that of 'Relevance to the Pupils' World.' These include topics of concern to both the

national society of which the pupils are members, and the more immediate world of pupils in terms of issues that are age and/or developmentally appropriate.

In aiming to provide insight into the practice of each teacher at the focus of this study, the following section details the findings for each in turn. Examples of relevant statements, questions and activities are given to illustrate the use of and the rationale underlying the use of these practices in each case. In doing so, the findings are recorded in table form in a cumulative fashion for each case as it is presented, thereby building an emerging picture of the most prominent practices across all five cases. This overview (Table 5) then forms the basis for the cross-case analysis presented in Chapter 5.

4.4 Findings for Teacher 1

All the lessons observed taught by Teacher 1 took place in Grade 6 (age 12) lessons. Several practices featured frequently in these lessons.

Making Connections

The practice of making connections was a regular occurrence in the lessons of Teacher 1, whereby the teacher activated pupils' prior knowledge and experiences in two primary areas. The first concerned the main topics of the lessons, which were, for the most part, of relevance to the world of the pupils. Connections were made to the national identity of the pupils through focusing on the life of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in commemoration of the nationally marked anniversary of his assassination. Further connections were made to the pupils' world in lessons based on a text about 'The Simpsons' - television characters familiar to the pupils, and relevant vocabulary for items and utensils used in the kitchen.

The second main area in which Teacher 1 encouraged pupils to make connections was in relation to their previous linguistic-related knowledge of

phonic rules and sound-letter correspondences in English. On several occasions, for example while relating to newly-presented words, the teacher highlighted specific sound-letter patterns - such as 'spoon' with 'oo' , or 'knife' with the silent 'k,' and asked pupils to suggest additional words with the same properties.

In the interviews, Teacher 1 related to the importance of encouraging pupils to make connections to their prior knowledge and experience. She described how, as a student English teacher many years ago, her master teacher 'took everything she taught and connected it to their (the pupils') lives' in order to motivate them, and how she herself has since adopted this approach since 'it is meaningful, it stays in their minds.' Similarly in acknowledging the need to help her pupils make connections to their prior knowledge of sounds and letters, Teacher 1 noted that she 'always include(s) phonics with new words (and) ask(s) for word families ... (since)... this helps them with reading.'

In enabling pupils to make such connections to their prior knowledge, the observations revealed that Teacher 1 employs two main practices. In the first instance, she herself makes direct connections to the content being taught. For example, as part of a lead-in to the kitchen vocabulary items to be introduced, the teacher stated 'I'm going to put on the board (pictures of) things that everyone has in the kitchen.' In this way she was, in essence, setting the scene for the new vocabulary by guiding pupils to make the connection to their own kitchens and the contents.

Secondly, Teacher 1 elicited pupils' prior knowledge of and therefore made connections to the lesson content by asking questions. In some cases the questions were of an open-ended nature. For example, on showing pictures of Yitzhak Rabin at different ages and stages of his life, the teacher asked 'What do you know about him.' In other instances the questions posed were closed questions. For example, in linking the discussion about the kitchen to pupils' own lives the teacher asked 'Who cooks your lunch?'

Instructional Coherence

A pattern for lesson structure revealing several aspects that may be categorised under the heading of Instructional Coherence emerged in the observations conducted in the lessons of Teacher 1. Firstly each lesson related to one main topic, including Yitchak Rabin, kitchen items and the Fire of London, with the tasks provided all centering on this topic. In several text-based lessons, the topic of the text was discussed and information shared, the relevant vocabulary was presented and/or elicited, the text was read and post-reading exercises were completed. The lessons for the most part, displayed coherence, whereby the parts of the lessons were logically connected to each other and were centred on a main theme and/or language skill –such as the text-based lessons that focused on developing reading comprehension skills. In addition the lessons of Teacher 1 displayed continuity, whereby each stage of a given lesson formed the basis for the next stage, which enabled progressive and systematic building of knowledge.

In the interviews Teacher 1 emphasised the importance of structuring her lessons according to stages when teaching the different language skills. She explained: 'I have to have stages in my lesson. I teach the pupils (in stages) even when I teach reading comprehension and listening comprehension. Even with new vocabulary there are stages. First it helps me and it helps the pupils understand, implement.'

Teacher 1 also described an example of a structured writing lesson. 'I had a writing lesson. I wanted them to describe a room. I followed the stages- first they had to copy, then fill in part of the sentence with the same structure, then I gave them a beginning and they had to finish the sentences, then one word and they had to write their own sentences. It has to be very graded so that the pupils will be able to produce their own sentences. We have mechanical writing- it concerns copying and quoting, parallel writing – filling

in the missing word, process writing- actual writing. The students are able to write by themselves after they are taught to do that using the stages.'

In providing such structure in instruction, Teacher 1 acknowledges the need to scaffold the learning process for her pupils, especially since, as she further commented, her classes are heterogeneous in terms of level of English, and pupils with a lower level of ability need to have the more challenging tasks scaffolded whereas more able pupils will be able to understand automatically.

Spoken Interaction

While English is not the pupil's first language and is indeed itself the object of instruction, notable opportunities for consideration of a main aspect of the lesson through discussion in English were provided by Teacher 1. In some cases the discussion was based on a picture and/or the focus of the text to be studied- such as Yitzhak Rabin and The Simpson family. During this time- generally between ten and fifteen minutes of a 45-minute lesson, pupils were offered the opportunity and volunteered to describe pictures and give information about the characters and/or situations depicted based on their prior knowledge. Grammatical mistakes were overlooked as ideas and suggestions flowed among the pupils.

In responding to the observation that her lessons make provision for pupils to engage in such spoken communication, Teacher 1 pointed out that she sees it as an essential element of developing oral competency in English and an opportunity to gain an insight into the world of her pupils by noting that: 'Yes I do that many times. It depends on the topic. I do that because in this way we use speaking. I do that one on one. Teacher-pupils, but also pupils-pupils. I like to have discussions with my 6th graders. I learn a lot about their own world, what they know and what they would like to know, still don't know.' Interestingly, Teacher 1 emphasised the fact that she does not see herself as the sole source of information in facilitating such discussions, since

issues may arise that she is not able to respond to or comment on. Hence, as Teacher 1 points out “I think the most important thing is I tell them I don’t know everything. I think that today the teacher’s job is not to give the knowledge. If I don’t know I tell them: ‘Ok- here is an opportunity to investigate’ and I send the pupils to find the answers.”

Learner Autonomy

In providing opportunities in to develop independent learning skills Teacher 1 frequently offered an element of choice to her pupils. This largely involved pupils deciding themselves how many questions from the post-reading exercises to answer –thus offering choice in quantity. Less-able pupils were therefore afforded greater opportunity to succeed in their task, by opting to answer fewer questions in the amount of time allotted. Thus as Teacher 1 noted, ‘I think ... it is connected to the fact that I teach heterogeneous classes and it helps the weak learners. They are not intimidated.’

The practices recorded as being employed frequently (as defined earlier) in the lesson observed given by Teacher 1 as described above are marked with a tick in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Prominent Practices: Teacher 1

Category	Prominent Practices Conducted and/or Promoted by the Teacher	Teacher 1
Making Connections	Teacher makes direct connections to prior knowledge	✓
	Teacher elicits pupils’ prior knowledge with open questions	✓
	Teacher elicits pupils’ prior knowledge with closed questions	✓
	Making connections to prior knowledge of the content/topic of the lesson	✓
	Making connections to prior knowledge of phonics	✓
Instructional Coherence	Lessons focus on a limited number of topics	✓
	Lessons display continuity and coherence	✓
	Teacher scaffolds learning (tasks, understanding of concepts)	✓
Spoken Interaction	Whole-class discussion	✓
Learner Autonomy	Offers choice	✓
Relevance to Pupil’s World	Relevance of topic	✓

4.5 Findings for Teacher 2

The lessons observed given by Teacher 2 took place across a range of grade levels - Grades 4, 5 and 6, (ages 10, 11 and 12 respectively). Analysis of the data collected revealed the most prominently recurring practices as described below.

Making Connections

As with Teacher 1, activating her pupils' prior knowledge by providing opportunities to make connections was a key element of the practice of Teacher 2. In stating that 'We usually start with a kind of a review, we add new information, texts etc. based on things that were done. I try ... to connect, to find connection, between subjects and start with familiar to unfamiliar content. I find it helps the students,' Teacher 2 confirmed the extent to which she emphasises activating pupils' prior knowledge, and was observed in practice in relation to two main areas of knowledge- content taught previously and linguistic content.

Content Taught Previously

The course books used in the EFL classrooms in Israel are invariably constructed of a series of units, whereby each unit centres on a specific topic. All the lessons observed in the classes of Teacher 2 were based on the relevant unit being studied at that time, and each lesson was a continuation of the previous lesson(s). As such, Teacher 2 devoted a significant part of most lessons observed to reviewing the topic of the previous lesson(s). In a Grade 5 lesson for example, where the unit focused on a story presented in the course book with a short extract on each consecutive page, Teacher 2 led her pupils through an interactive oral reconstruction of the story read so far, with particular emphasis on what had been read in the previous lesson. In this way, Teacher 2 was activating prior knowledge of the content taught previously in order to provide the common basis upon which pupils could

then proceed, primarily as she noted, for the benefit of those pupils needing more support in their learning. 'I always go back. ... The stronger pupils don't need me. I work with the average and lowest pupils. The average pupils – (who usually attain grades of) 7 to 8 - especially need it. Always- it's previous knowledge... and we continue.'

Linguistic Content

Teacher 2 also frequently focused on linguistic related content while encouraging pupils to make connections to their relevant prior knowledge. In relating to letter-sound correspondences for example, Teacher 2 made reference to the previously encountered silent 'e' rule, in presenting the written form and pronunciation of the name 'Mike'. On another occasion she asked pupils to remind her of the rule for the soft and hard sounds of 'c' in discussing the pronunciation of a new vocabulary item- race.

Teacher 2 also made frequent reference to pupils' prior knowledge of previously encountered language structures and vocabulary. In encouraging pupils to activate their prior knowledge of grammatical issues and differentiate between the uses of 's' – highlighting, in this case, the possessive form, Teacher 2 asked 'Which 's' is this?' In attempting to remind pupils of and elicit the previously encountered word 'sad' in a Grade 4 lesson, the teacher prompted her pupils in saying 'The cat is not happy, it is? '

Three strategies were employed extensively by Teacher 2 in encouraging pupils to make such connections. Firstly, she regularly engaged in making direct connections to pupils' prior knowledge of both content and linguistic knowledge. For example, Teacher 2 often broke into song related to the subject or vocabulary at the focus of the discussion at a given point. In discussing the poverty of the character Mr. Green, Teacher 2 stated: 'It's all about money' and sang 'Money makes the world go round.' A second strategy, also employed extensively by Teacher 2 in facilitating the activation of prior knowledge through making connections, was eliciting information

using closed questions. For example in working on an activity to categorise vocabulary items, Teacher 2 asked... 'Pink belongs to (which) family...?' Thirdly, Teacher 2 regularly used various prompts to activate pupils' prior knowledge and elicit responses. These included unfinished spoken sentences, such as 'There is a garden a....(round) the house,' and written prompts on the board , such as the words too, to and two in reminding pupils of the meaning of 'too' that featured in the section of the course book being studied at that time.

Spoken Interaction

As in the lessons of Teacher 1, spoken interaction between teacher and pupils in a whole class forum took place frequently in the lessons of Teacher 2. However, in contrast to Teacher 1, the discussions focused largely on the content of the book. Hence, the majority of the time in which pupils were engaged in discussion was spent reviewing book-based content that had been taught previously – such as identifying items in a picture in a Grade 4 lesson using a basic sentence structure 'I see a....', or reviewing key elements of the story 'Stop that Noise' covered so far in a Grade 5 lesson. Such practice provided regular opportunity for pupils to express themselves orally in English as an integral element of the English Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2001), – a priority set by Teacher 2 since, as she noted, 'They have to leave school knowing English. They can't leave school without being able to finish a sentence or say a word.'

The prominent practices of Teacher 2 have been added to Table 1, thereby revealing the findings to this point as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Prominent Practices: Teachers 1 and 2

Category	Prominent Practices Conducted and/or Promoted by the Teacher	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
Making Connections	Teacher makes direct connections to prior knowledge	✓	✓
	Teacher elicits pupils' prior knowledge with open questions	✓	
	Teacher elicits pupils' prior knowledge with closed questions	✓	✓
	Teacher uses prompts to make connections to prior knowledge and experiences		✓
	Making connections to prior knowledge of the content/topic of the lesson	✓	✓
	Making connections to content taught previously		✓
	Making connections to prior knowledge of phonics	✓	✓
	Making connections to grammatical structures taught previously		✓
	Making connections to vocabulary taught previously		✓
Instructional Coherence	Lessons focus on a limited number of topics	✓	
	Lessons display continuity and coherence	✓	
	Teacher scaffolds learning (tasks , understanding of concepts)	✓	
Spoken Interaction	Whole-class discussion	✓	✓
Learner Autonomy	Offers choice	✓	
Relevance to Pupil's World	Relevance of topic	✓	

4.6 Findings for Teacher 3

The lessons observed given by Teacher 3 took place in Grades 5 and 6 – ages 11 and 12 respectively. The broad variety of prominent practices that featured in these lessons, is described forthwith.

Making Connections

As with both Teachers 1 and 2, activating pupils' prior knowledge though making connections occurred frequently in the lessons of Teacher 3. Teacher 3 focused on two prominent areas: the main content/topic of the lesson or task and aspects of linguistic knowledge.

In making connections to the topic of lessons Teacher 3 referred her pupils to their prior knowledge of such as: items that can be purchased in a market, the story of Robin Hood and the organisation of items on a menu. The areas of linguistic knowledge that featured prominently in activating pupils' prior knowledge were: (a) letter-sound correspondences, for example in attempting to elicit the pronunciation of Maid (Marianne) during a reading exercise, Teacher 3 asked 'What (sound) do 'a' and 'i' make together?' , (b) knowledge of grammar, such as identifying verb forms in a text, and asking pupils to clarify to whom 'my' refers in a specific context and (c) prior knowledge of vocabulary, such as when pupils encountered the unfamiliar word 'message', Teacher 3 drew their attention to the familiar internet chat programme 'Messenger' in order to make the connection to a relevant and familiar vocabulary item.

In facilitating pupils' ability and awareness of the need to make connections to their previous knowledge, three prominent practices were employed by Teacher 3. The first, as with both of the previous teachers referred to, was by the teacher herself making direct connection to the issue at hand. For example, in presenting the title of the chapter in the course book- 'Stories', Teacher 3 made reference to types of stories with which pupils were familiar. The second practice was by eliciting information from pupils through questions. Some of the questions were closed, in that the correct response was predetermined, such as 'Who is going to the market?' in relation to information in a specific text. Other questions were open-ended, thereby leaving room for pupils to offer a broader range of information based on what they knew, such as 'What do you remember about the story?' The final means used regularly by Teacher 3 in making connections was that of prompts. Unfinished sentences were used to simulate prior knowledge- such as 'When we shorten words we put the apostrophe instead of ...,' then completed with pupils' responses - in this case 'vowels.'

Higher Order Thinking Skills

Unlike the practice of the previously cited teachers, the instructional practices of Teacher 3 offered regular opportunities for pupils to develop thinking skills of a higher order, with a particular emphasis on logical reasoning and explaining ideas.

In asking pupils to consider an issue and draw conclusions based on the evidence presented, Teacher 3 provided her pupils with opportunities to develop the ability to reason through logic. For example, in reviewing possessive pronouns using exercises in a workbook, Teacher 3 said: 'Look at the word 'my'. Are we talking about Yasmine or is she talking about herself?' On receipt of the correct response, Teacher 3 asked pupils to explain how and why they came to that conclusion. This is just one of several examples of the facilitation of the development of the second higher order skill mentioned- explaining ideas, in the practice of Teacher 3. On a separate occasion, after working through a process of establishing rules for the spelling forms of verbs in the past simple tense with the class, Teacher 3 asked pupils to explain the rules in writing in their own notebooks and then share their explanation with a partner.

In the post-analysis interview, Teacher 3 noted that the practice of having pupils rationalize and explain their ideas to others not only helped them to clarify and articulate their ideas for themselves, but also provided other pupils who may not have grasped a concept initially with further opportunity to do so.

Instructional Coherence

The practice of Teacher 3 frequently promoted coherence in instruction through two principal channels. Firstly, the body of the lessons observed given by Teacher 3 centred on one main issue. This included topic-based content such as the market or the story of Robin Hood, or a particular

teaching point, such as reading comprehension tasks or verbs in the past simple form. Teacher 3 stated that even though points may arise in the course of the lesson that demand revision, in maintaining a main focus for her teaching she ensures logic and order in her lessons, and pupils will not be 'flooded with things.'

The second aspect of Instructional Coherence relates to the scaffolding of learning. On several occasions, Teacher 3 offered structured guidance to her pupils, by scaffolding the learning process for them. In some cases such scaffolding related to the understanding or use of a language point. For example, in being asked for the date, one pupil noted it was '25 of January'. Teacher 3 took the opportunity to highlight the difference between cardinal and ordinal numbers- i.e. the use of 25 as opposed to 25th. She first counted pupils in the class and then went on to explain the 'th' as part of fifth, and other such examples.

More frequently the scaffolding was provided for pupils to embark upon challenging tasks. For example, in explaining an exercise to be done, Teacher 3 led her pupils through a step-by-step process of how to embark upon the exercise, as shown in the extract below.

Pupils are asked to open their workbooks on page 16.

Teacher 3 - What do you see?

Pupils offer responses -Pictures, sentences, letters, numbers.

Teacher 3- Look at the sentences. Before each sentence there is a?

Pupils in chorus -Number

Teacher 3- Look at the pictures. Beside each picture there is a ...?

Pupils in chorus – Letter

Teacher 3- Now read the instructions.

Pupils read instructions out loud in chorus in Hebrew

Teacher 3- So, what do we need to do?

The teacher explains the instructions in English.

Teacher 3 expressed her firm belief in the necessity to provide such support for her pupils since as she noted in the post data analysis interview: 'Every kid has to be able to feel he succeeded. If it (learning) is structured they'll be able to cope.... I do it because if not they'll never get to the point where they are independent enough... I lead them through it, so that they don't need me. I use ... steps so that I can then take them away and they (pupils) become independent learners.'

In furthering this perception, Teacher 3 offered additional frequent opportunities to promote autonomy among her learners as described below.

Learner Autonomy

Three main areas relating to the development of learner independence are integral to the practice of Teacher 3. The first is offering choice. Prior to each lesson, Teacher 3 writes the lesson outline on the board, part of which is listed under the heading of 'Choice activities'. During this part of the lesson, which varies in length for each pupil according to whether he has outstanding tasks to complete or not, pupils may choose to engage in such as reading books, playing games, or completing worksheets. In this way, according to Teacher 3, 'They will go where they feel more comfortable, where they want to, with whoever they want to,' whereas 'If you say the one thing- this- is what we are going to do, you are always going to have kids who do nothing.' In acknowledging that some pupils may find difficulty in varying their choice, Teacher 3 notes that 'Once the kids get in the habit of working in free choice I say they have to choose areas they haven't been to before,' thereby encouraging them to expand their horizons and experience a broader range of activities.

An additional practice that featured prominently in the lessons of Teacher 3 was the opportunity for pupils to engage in the management of time and

therefore pace in their own learning. For example, as mentioned earlier, the lesson outline is written up on the board (using both Hebrew and English) before each lesson. When pupils come in to the English classroom they are expected to start working independently according to the guidelines provided on the board. Below is one such example which, although written on the board in what may appear as shorthand, the pupils understood what was required of them and immediately set to work. Panorama is the name of the course book used.

1. Write the date
2. New title- 'A Famous Legend' – copy
3. Panorama p. 78 – copy the words and their meanings
4. Panorama p.78-79 'Before you read'. Write the answer.
5. Read the story
6. 'After you read' activity
7. Choice activities
8. Homework

The third example of practice that promotes learner independence in the classroom of Teacher 3 concerns learners' self-evaluation of their work. Pupils were asked to review their completed written assignments in class and, if satisfied with their work, to place them in a designated basket for the teacher to check. If they felt their work need further revision they were expected to do so at home and submit it the next lesson.

A summary of the prominent practices of Teacher 3 is recorded in Table 3 alongside the previously recorded findings of this study.

Table 3 Prominent Practices: Teachers 1-3

Category	Prominent Practices Conducted and/or Promoted by the Teacher	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
Making Connections	Teacher makes direct connections to prior knowledge	✓	✓	✓
	Teacher elicits pupils' prior knowledge with open questions	✓		✓
	Teacher elicits pupils' prior knowledge with closed questions	✓	✓	✓
	Teacher uses prompts to make connections to prior knowledge and experiences		✓	✓
	Making connections to prior knowledge of the content/topic of the lesson	✓	✓	✓
	Making connections to content taught previously		✓	
	Making connections to prior knowledge of phonics	✓	✓	✓
	Making connections to grammatical structures taught previously		✓	✓
	Making connections to vocabulary taught previously		✓	✓
Higher Order Thinking	Teacher provides opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills			✓
Instructional Coherence	Lessons focus on a limited number of topics	✓		✓
	Lessons display continuity and coherence	✓		
	Teacher scaffolds learning (tasks , understanding of concepts)	✓		✓
Spoken Interaction	Whole- class discussion	✓	✓	
Learner Autonomy	Offers choice	✓		✓
	Pupil's self-management of time and pace			✓
	Pupils' self-evaluation of work completed			✓
Relevance to pupil's world	Relevance of topic	✓		

4.7 Findings for Teacher 4

The lessons observed given by Teacher 4 all took place in Grade 4 classes (age 10). The observations revealed that the instructional practices highlighted below were conducted frequently in these classes.

Making Connections

Teacher 4 engaged in the practice of making connections by activating pupils' prior knowledge in two main areas. The first relates to the main content of the lesson. For example, in preparation for reading and writing an invitation to a party, the teacher elicited the information likely to be found on such a text – such as 'Where?' and 'When?' Teacher 4 also emphasised connections to previously encountered vocabulary in order to extend pupil's knowledge. In reminding pupils of the meaning of 'football' for example, Teacher 4 highlighted the words 'foot' and 'ball' and asked pupils for the meanings of these words in Hebrew. She then asked pupils to put them together in order to identify the meaning of the whole compound word in English which, in this case, is also used in Hebrew. In another instance, on presenting the word 'shopkeeper,' Teacher 4 asked her pupils if they recognised anything in this word. They immediately identified 'shop' and 'keep' and gave the meanings in Hebrew. At this point the teacher led her pupils to the relevance of these two words in comprehending the compound word 'shopkeeper' as a whole.

Connections to both content and vocabulary were made in three main ways. Firstly Teacher 4 made direct connections for her pupils. For example in reviewing the word 'dentist' she mentioned a word used in Hebrew that is related both in sound and meaning to her pupils – the word for dental floss - 'khut dentali'. Secondly, on several occasions Teacher 4 posed closed questions to her pupils as a means of activating their prior knowledge. Examples observed include 'Who do I call when I dial 100?' (the number for the police in Israel) and 'What is the difference between what day and what time?' Thirdly, Teacher 4 used prompts such as unfinished sentences to stimulate pupils' recollection of previously encountered information. For example in reviewing vocabulary Teacher 4 said: 'If my dog is not healthy I take him to the' The pupils then responded appropriately in chorus with 'vet'.

In the interviews Teacher 4 emphasised the importance of making connections in order to facilitate pupils' learning. She noted that, in her view, 'learning is creating some close associations between details in your mind – mental associations, in order to get new knowledge. It's like a house you build- a base, new bricks you put on previous bricks.'

Higher Order Thinking Skills

In encouraging the development of thinking skills beyond the level of recall or repetition, Teacher 4 took opportunities to ask her pupils challenging questions. For example, in examining a table recording the weekly routine of a boy and eliciting information gleaned from the table, Teacher 4 asked pupils how they know he doesn't play football on a given day. In order to respond correctly pupils needed to explain how they had inferred such a conclusion from the information given in the text.

Teacher 4 confirmed her perception of the importance of developing pupils' thinking skills in stating that 'I'm always challenging them. I'm always expanding what they need to know. ...I ask them a lot of 'why' questions. – they have to reach conclusions.'

Spoken Interaction

Teacher 4 engaged her pupils frequently in spoken interaction in her lessons. The main focus of such interaction in several of the lessons observed related to the topic of invitations, whereby class discussion centred on the content and format of the text type. In the post-analysis interview, Teacher 4 noted that she offers opportunities for discussion when reading texts, stating that while exposing her pupils to a new text, she 'stop(s) a lot while reading ... (to) ask them questions along the way – to encourage them to think while reading.' Interestingly, during the interview, Teacher 4 noted that such practice is almost exclusively conducted in a teacher-pupil forum, and that

perhaps 'One thing ... (she) can improve is them (pupils) discussing between themselves'.

Scaffolding

Teacher 4 employed the technique of scaffolding in the learning process, which as will be recalled, is considered as an element of Instructional Coherence, in order to help her pupils complete challenging tasks and comprehend specific concepts. In preparing pupils for the task of writing an invitation, Teacher 4 elicited and listed, as noted above, the various areas of information needed and used pupils' suggestions to construct an example of the text on the board. In another lesson, in reviewing the homework task Teacher 4 asked pupils to locate information from a table showing the weekly routine of a boy as described above. Below is an extract from the researcher's notes taken during an observation in which Teacher 4 leads her pupils through a scaffolded process of locating information from the table that they had been unsuccessful in doing independently, to find out on which days of the week the boy as the central character in the text plays football.

Teacher 4- He doesn't play (football) on.... Monday, Wednesday, Friday.

Individual pupils continue reading the information from the text aloud.

Teacher 4- So which days does he play? (Only two hands go up.)

Teacher 4- Let's sing the 'days song'.

Teacher 4 starts to sing each day and asks:

'Monday. Does he play on Monday?'

Pupils – yes.

The sequence continues to the end of the song.

Teacher 4 - Good. See how the song helps you.

Teacher 4 goes over the teaching point - the day he does play/doesn't play football. She draws circles on the board o o o o o o - each circle represents a day. Teacher 4 marks the circle to represent and illustrate each day on which he plays football.

In confirming her use of the practice of scaffolding in the post data analysis interview, Teacher 4 noted. 'I always do that. I ask them a lot of leading questions. ...I do everything so that they'll get to the answers and the idea themselves.'

The more prominently used instructional practices identified in the lessons of Teacher 4 and described above are recorded on Table 4.

Table 4 Prominent Practices: Teachers 1- 4

Category	Prominent Practices Conducted and/or Promoted by the Teacher	T. 1	T.2	T.3	T. 4
Making Connections	Teacher makes direct connections to prior knowledge	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Teacher elicits pupils' prior knowledge with open questions	✓		✓	
	Teacher elicits pupils' prior knowledge with closed questions	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Teacher uses prompts to make connections to prior knowledge and experiences		✓	✓	✓
	Making connections to prior knowledge of the content/topic of the lesson	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Making connections to content taught previously		✓		
	Making connections to prior knowledge of phonics	✓	✓	✓	
	Making connections to grammatical structures taught previously		✓	✓	
	Making connections to vocabulary taught previously		✓	✓	✓
Higher Order Thinking	Teacher provides opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills			✓	✓
Instructional Coherence	Lessons focus on a limited number of topics	✓		✓	
	Lessons display continuity and coherence	✓			
	Teacher scaffolds learning (tasks , understanding of concepts)	✓		✓	✓
Spoken Interaction	Whole- class discussion	✓	✓		✓
Learner Autonomy	Offers choice			✓	
	Pupil's self-management of time and pace			✓	
	Pupils' self-evaluation of work completed			✓	
Relevance to pupil's world	Relevance of topic	✓			

4.8 Findings for Teacher 5

The lessons observed given by Teacher 5 took place in Grades 5 and 6. Several instructional practices occurred frequently in these lessons, as described below.

Making Connections

As with all the other teachers at the centre of this study, Teacher 5 placed considerable emphasis on making connections to pupils' prior knowledge and personal experiences. However, while the other teachers did so by making frequent connections to more to than one aspect, Teacher 5 did so almost exclusively by making connections to the main content or topic of the lesson. Such content included celebrating birthdays and Italy- focusing on the flag and pizza.

In order to activate her pupils' prior knowledge of these topics, Teacher 5 employed all the instructional practices identified in this study. In making direct connections for example, when working on a text about the origin of pizza, Teacher 5 pointed out that 'Queen Margarita reminds us of pizza margarita' –a widely known variety and popular choice in pizza restaurants in Israel.

Teacher 5 regularly posed questions to her pupils to facilitate the activation of prior knowledge. Some questions were of a closed nature. In referring to birthday customs discussed in the previous lesson for example, the teacher asked 'What do they do in Canada for luck?' Other questions were more open-ended, therefore allowing pupils to relate to their relevant personal experiences such as 'How do you celebrate your birthday? Where do you go? What do you do?'

In other situations, Teacher 5 employed prompts such as unfinished sentences in eliciting and enabling pupils to express their prior content

knowledge in English, as illustrated in the following brief extract from a more extensive discussion about the origin of pizza.

Teacher 5- So you think Italy is famous for....

Pupils- Pizza

Finally, on some occasions Teacher 5 encouraged her pupils to make connections themselves. In leading her pupils towards the connection between the colours of the Italian flag and the colours of pizza Teacher 5 remarked:

'Look. Shira noticed it (the flag) has green, white and red. How is the idea related to the subject (pizza)?

Higher Order Thinking Skills

Teacher 5 provided regular opportunities for her pupils to use various higher order thinking skills in her lessons. These included: logical reasoning- whereby, for example, pupils were asked to consider if and why an unexpected response to a closed question was suitable, predicting the content of a text using both contextual and non-contextual clues, and applying knowledge acquired to new situations – such as constructing a sentence with previously learned vocabulary.

In activities that demanded more in-depth examination of the topic, Teacher 5 posed questions that required responses beyond mere recall. For example, in discussing the lyrics of a song about recognizing people's inner qualities she asked 'What do you take from the song?' In promoting such in-depth thought, Teacher 5 offered opportunities for her pupils to take time in considering their own ideas and explanations.

While discussing the issue of developing thinking skills in the interviews, Teacher 5 noted her concern in encouraging her pupils 'to be thinking people', to know that different opinions and perspectives are valid and that,

drawing on her own beliefs established through her literature background, 'there is no black and white.'

Instructional Coherence

Various aspects relating to instructional coherence were apparent in the lessons of Teacher 5 observed. Firstly, each lesson was built around one central topic or issue – be it a song, birthdays or pizza as mentioned above, thereby displaying coherence. Secondly the lessons exhibited continuity, with the activities logically connected to each other, serving as 'building blocks' as noted by Teacher 5, that support the logical building of knowledge. Below is an outline of one lesson observed that illustrates these qualities.

1. The teacher elicits the title of the new unit in the book and writes on the board:
'Food and Birthdays'
2. Discussion with all the class based on questions including: How do you celebrate your birthdays? Where do you go? What do you eat? What customs do we have in Israel when celebrating birthdays? What do you take to a birthday celebration? What do you provide for your own birthday party?
3. The teacher highlights the aspects to be focused upon in the upcoming unit including: finding out how people from other countries celebrate birthdays, making an invitation.
4. Pre-reading discussion about the first text in the unit that incorporates some of the issues discussed earlier – prediction of content using pictures and title.
5. Reading the text aloud.
6. Pupils engage in follow-up comprehension exercises from the course book.

In the interviews Teacher 5 highlighted the aspects of coherence and continuity in lesson structure, in noting that her practice reflects her personal need for seeing 'how things fit in with each other, where it leads to,' and that 'If I can't see where it (an activity) leads to I won't include it.'

Spoken Interaction

Engaging the class as a whole in in-depth discussion was observed to be a key element of this teacher's practice, to which a considerable amount of time in all lessons observed was devoted. Examples of topics examined

through discussion have been referred to in the sections above. In relating to the need to encourage pupils to engage in discussion, Teacher 5 cited three principal reasons for doing so.

Firstly, significant reference was made to the fact it helps pupils to develop their thinking skills. Secondly, in light of her own 'need... as a non- native English speaker- to overcome the language barrier in talking,' Teacher 5 emphasised the need to provide opportunities for her pupils to engage in conversation in English. Thirdly, by allowing pupils to express their thoughts openly through discussion she gained insight into her pupils' world, noting that 'Sometimes for example, when I teach a song I ask a question and they give me an answer that I hadn't expected or thought of and it helps me understand their world and their thoughts.'

Relevance to the Pupils' World

Teacher 5 was highly conscious of the need for learning to be of relevance to the world of her pupils. This awareness was apparent in her practice by the emphasis placed on the connections between the content of her lessons – including topics mentioned above such as pizza, birthdays, a contemporary, popular song, pupils' personal feelings, and the world and experiences of her pupils, all of which being age and/or developmentally appropriate. In the interviews, Teacher 5 consistently emphasised the need to encourage pupils to make connections to their prior knowledge and experiences so that learning 'will be close to their internal world, connect them to their world, not disconnected – to their feelings and experience...' She noted that the need to have a broad content knowledge perspective is very much representative of herself, stating that 'I am from a family of teachers so knowledge is very important to me- (it's important to me) that the kids will finish Grade 6 with knowledge of the world... that they don't only learn the subject in the course book but also see how it is connected to world knowledge.'

The instructional practices that featured regularly in the lessons of Teacher 5 have been added to the table as shown in Table 5, alongside the previously recorded findings, thereby presenting an overview of the prominent practices of all five teachers.

Table 5 Prominent Practices: All Teachers

Category	Prominent Practices Conducted and/or Promoted by the Teacher	T.1	T.2	T. 3	T.4	T.5
Making Connections	Teacher makes direct connections to prior knowledge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Teacher elicits pupils' prior knowledge with open questions	✓		✓		✓
	Teacher elicits pupils' prior knowledge with closed questions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Teacher uses prompts to make connections to prior knowledge and experiences		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Making connections to prior knowledge of the content/topic of the lesson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Making connections to content taught previously		✓			
	Making connections to prior knowledge of phonics	✓	✓	✓		
	Making connections to grammatical structures taught previously		✓	✓		
	Making connections to vocabulary taught previously		✓	✓	✓	
Higher Order Thinking	Teacher provides opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills			✓	✓	✓
Instructional Coherence	Lessons focus on a limited number of topics	✓		✓		✓
	Lessons display continuity and coherence	✓				✓
	Teacher scaffolds learning (tasks , understanding of concepts)	✓		✓	✓	
Spoken Interaction	Whole- class discussion	✓	✓		✓	✓
Learner Autonomy	Offers choice	✓		✓		
	Pupil's self-management of time and pace			✓		
	Pupils' self-evaluation of work completed			✓		
Relevance to Pupil's world	Relevance of Topic	✓				✓

4.9 Summary

In identifying and detailing the prominent practices of the five effective teachers at the focus of this study, and subsequently recording the findings in an ongoing fashion throughout, this account has culminated in the overview of the information gathered, shown in Table 5. It can be seen that some categories and individual practices within them feature more prominently overall, while others less so. It is this picture that that serves as the basis for the discussion and analysis of the findings across the five cases presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This enquiry, as will be recalled, aims to answer the question 'How do effective EFL teachers in the Israeli (Jewish sector) elementary school facilitate learning?' In the multiple case study conducted to fulfill this aim, the relevant findings for each case (teacher) were highlighted in turn in the previous chapter, and shown in the overview of the most prominent practices in Table 5. However, this alone does not provide sufficient insight into the issue at hand.

Stake (2005:445), in reference to the multiple case study, notes that '...a number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon ...' Thomas (2011:141), in confirming this perception, notes that in a single case study the main focus of interest is on the case itself, whereas in a multiple-case study 'the focus is unequivocally on the phenomenon of which the case is an example.' Hence, while of interest and value in their own right, the findings of 'each individual case (are) less important ... than the comparison each offers with the others' (Thomas 2011:141) in a multiple case study, since as Thomas (2011:153) further notes, in the multiple case study 'emphasis is on comparing... different examples and the contrasts found between and among the cases.'

As such, this chapter offers a cross-case analysis of the findings presented in the previous chapter, whereby key practices in facilitating learning that emerged are discussed under two main headings: Knowledge Construction and Relevance in Instruction.

5.2 Knowledge Construction

Providing opportunity for pupils to construct knowledge in classroom practice is, as mentioned earlier, considered fundamental to learning of high intellectual quality as a key aspect of authenticity in pedagogy (as purported by Newmann et al 1996, Roelofs and Terwell, 1999, and NSW DET, 2003), and, in turn, crucial to the enhancement of learning outcomes. Several aspects of practice recognised to foster the construction of knowledge were highlighted in Chapter 3. These include making connections to relevant background knowledge, promoting the use and development of higher order thinking skills, facilitating consideration of topics and issues through discussion, and providing coherent instructional practices. The ensuing section will discuss how and the extent to which each of these aspects was implemented overall in the classrooms at the focus of this study, as presented in the findings.

5.2.1 Making Connections to Relevant Background Knowledge

As noted earlier, background knowledge is recognised to serve as a foundation for furthering the learning process. As such, in preparing the ground for the introduction of new content matter in the classroom, it is necessary for learners to make connections to and thereby activate and/or establish relevant background knowledge if further effective learning is to occur.

All five teachers in this study demonstrate acceptance of and provision for the need to provide pupils with opportunity to make connections to prior knowledge relevant to the content being taught. The marked extent to which this occurs in the practice of effective teachers is not surprising, since much attention is given to the importance of prior knowledge within the field of EFL instruction in Israel. For example, in the document of Professional Standards for English Teachers: Knowledge and Performance (Ministry of Education,

2004:10), it is explicitly stated that when teachers 'encourage learners to make links between prior and new knowledge', they are recognised to have met one of the required professional standards in the domain of 'Learners and Learning'.

Likewise, prior knowledge, as noted earlier, is a much-discussed concept in the literature on reading in both first and second/foreign languages. Since significant importance is attached to the need to learn to read in English and therefore the teaching of reading in the Israeli EFL classroom, both relevant pre and in-service training and development programmes for English teachers in Israel relate to the place of prior knowledge in developing reading comprehension skills. In light of these observations, and in considering that several of the lessons observed in this study were based on written texts, the extensive provision for enabling pupils to make connections to their prior knowledge is not unexpected.

The importance of the place of making connections was acknowledged by several teachers in the follow up interviews. The analogy used by Teacher 4 in regarding her teaching as a house being built whereby each new brick (as a metaphor for each piece of knowledge) is placed upon the previous brick, illustrates this point. In enabling pupils to make connections to relevant prior knowledge, different instructional practices were employed.

Instructional Practices for Making Connections

In providing pupils with opportunities to establish and/or access the prior knowledge necessary to further the construction of knowledge on a given topic, four main practices were employed in the classrooms observed. Three were particularly prominent, since they were employed by either four or five of the teachers on a frequent basis. These are the practice of the teacher herself providing information or suggestions that make direct connections to

pupils' prior knowledge, posing closed-ended questions and using prompts such as unfinished sentences.

While in the case of the latter two, the practices may be categorised as 'cued elicitation....a way of drawing out from students the information they (teachers) are seeking – the 'right' answers' (Mercer 2000:26), the prominent use of all of these three techniques may indicate that the teachers observed are somewhat prone to orchestrating the activation of prior knowledge in accordance with their own views of what pupils need to know in order to proceed with the construction of new knowledge. However, this was not discussed with, nor therefore confirmed by, the teachers themselves.

Despite this apparent tendency, more open-ended techniques, specifically the fourth favoured practice of asking open-ended questions, which may be categorised as 'free call tasks' (Holmes and Roser 1987:647) were also used frequently by three of the teachers (Teachers 1, 3 and 5) in activating the prior knowledge needed for further learning. In this instance, in contrast to the three techniques cited above, pupils were encouraged to offer any relevant information of their choice. In some cases, for example by Teachers 1 and 3, open-ended questions such as 'What do you remember/know about...?' were used to elicit information about the topic. In other instances – specifically in the practice of Teachers 1 and 5, open-ended questions were used frequently to encourage pupils to relate their personal experiences and/or feelings in the effort to establish relevant background knowledge.

The findings further indicate that the extensive activation of prior knowledge focuses on different content areas. Thus, while an in-depth examination of the nature of this knowledge is beyond the scope of this study, brief consideration of this issue is both relevant and worthwhile.

Content of Prior Knowledge

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the literature acknowledges that there are several possible aspects of pupils' prior knowledge that bear significance to learning in general and/or language learning in particular. The range of categories to which connections are made in the course of classroom activity identified in the previous chapter, confirms the relevance of this perspective within this study.

The extensive use by all five teachers of facilitating connections to pupils' prior knowledge of the main topic of the lesson is particularly noteworthy. Several of the lessons observed focused on written texts of varied topics such as *The Simpsons*, *Robin Hood*, and a popular song entitled 'Beautiful', as cited in the previous chapter. In light of the aforementioned observations regarding prior knowledge and reading, this revelation is not entirely unexpected. However, the findings in relation to making connections to prior linguistic-related knowledge present a somewhat different picture.

Prior knowledge in relation to the elements of linguistic knowledge (of phonics, grammar and vocabulary) is activated frequently in the practice of four teachers (Teachers 1, 2, 3 and 4). Three teachers (Teachers 1, 2 and 3) emphasise the aspect of phonics and three the aspect of vocabulary (Teachers 2, 3 and 4), whereas two teachers (Teachers 2 and 3) make frequent reference to grammatical aspects of the language in activating prior knowledge. In all, therefore, only Teachers 2 and 3 focus intensively on activating all aspects of linguistic-related prior knowledge on a regular basis, therefore indicating that doing so is not a major priority in the practice of the five teachers overall. Given that the study was conducted in a foreign language learning context, this revelation is somewhat surprising, especially since the teaching of all three aspects of linguistic knowledge recorded are central pillars of EFL methodology courses in pre-service training programmes in Israel.

5.2.2 Promoting the Use and Development of Higher Order Thinking Skills

This study indicates that the need to foster the use and development of higher order thinking skills is recognised by and accommodated frequently in the practice of three teachers – Teachers 3, 4 and 5. The findings show that regular opportunities to do so are provided primarily by asking such as ‘Why?’ or ‘How?’ questions and prompting in-depth discussion that promotes the albeit somewhat limited range of skills of reasoning (by Teachers 3 and 5) and explaining ideas and opinions (by Teachers 3,4 and 5). The recognition of the need to provide opportunities for pupils to develop thinking skills of a higher order was emphasised in the follow-up discussions by Teachers 3, 4 and 5. As Teacher 5 noted succinctly, providing opportunity for her pupils to become ‘thinking people’ is a priority in her practice.

While opportunities for higher order thinking were apparent in the practice of more than half of the teachers studied, (three out of the five), such provision is made to a lesser degree than may have been expected overall, in light of the extent to which such thinking is considered key to effective learning, as determined earlier in the review of the relevant literature (see Resnick 1987). Furthermore, the range of skills incorporated in promoting the development of higher order thinking skills is limited in the practice of the teachers in this study.

A possible explanation for this phenomenon lies in the fact that the need to foster higher order thinking skills has only relatively recently surfaced in the Israeli education system, in light of the poor scores on international tests that include demonstration of higher order thinking, as mentioned earlier. As also noted earlier, levels of EFL are not tested on international tests. The testing of higher order thinking on high stake national tests has only recently been introduced at the high school level in English teaching to a significant extent, whereas its inclusion in national tests in lower grades is minimal.

As such, while this study divulges initial encouraging evidence that the practice of effective elementary school English teachers is beginning to accommodate the development of pupils' higher order thinking skills, it is reasonable to assume that there is not yet extensive awareness of the need to do so. Thus the integration of such skills in the English elementary school classroom may be considered in its infancy.

5.2.3 Facilitating Discussion

In the lessons observed for the purpose of this study, four of the five teachers (Teachers 1,2,4 and 5) provided frequent opportunities for pupils to consider topics and issues (examples of which included the topic of a text and personal feelings) through discussion in whole-class forums mediated by the teacher.

The discussions were conducted in English as the target language at an appropriate level for the class. Thus, while pupils may not have been able to express themselves orally at the same level of articulation or in the same depth as they may have done in their mother-tongue, the discussions facilitated consideration of topics and issues by encouraging pupils to share and extend their knowledge, ideas and opinions accordingly.

The discussions served three main purposes in the lessons observed. Firstly they enabled teachers to assess, activate and/or establish pupils' relevant prior knowledge of the topic at hand – for example by discussing familiar characters in a picture (Teacher 1) or reviewing the content of a text read previously (Teacher 2). Secondly, as in the practice of Teachers 4 and 5, class discussions were used to promote the development and use of higher order thinking skills- by such as predicting the content of a text and offering opinions on a subject. Indeed, in the interviews both Teachers 4 and 5 made reference to the point that facilitating regular discussion gives pupils opportunity to develop their thinking abilities, a perception compatible with

that of Stanulis et al (2012:34) who reason that 'High level discussions can provide teachers with access to student thinking and understanding, promote higher order thinking...'

In light of these observations it may be concluded that the somewhat extensive practice of facilitating class discussions in the lessons observed resonates with indications from previous studies that identify the contribution of exploration of topics and issues through discussion as a channel for constructing knowledge. (See Siraj-Blatchford et al 2011:6, Newmann et al 1996, Roelofs and Terwell 1999, NSW DET 2003, Department of Education, Queensland 2002). Furthermore, in the cases of Teachers 4 and 5 in particular, such discussions may be regarded as the 'substantive' (Knobloch 2003:24) discourse as an element of the 'elaborated communication' (Newmann et al 1996:28) referred to earlier that facilitates quality intellectual activity.

A third reason for promoting frequent opportunities for pupils to engage in whole class discussions was highlighted in the interviews by Teachers 1,2 and 5 –the need for pupils to gain oral proficiency in English. In light of the importance placed on English in Israel as an international language of communication and, therefore, a key facet of the English Curriculum (Ministry of Education, Israel, 2001), both the recognition of the need for pupils to be allowed to express themselves orally and the promotion of regular opportunities to do so in practice, are not unexpected. This leads, in turn, to a further issue worthy of mention.

As noted earlier, in real life situations different forms of communication may be used to convey information, ideas and opinions, one being that of written communication. While frequent opportunity for developing spoken proficiency was prominent in the practice of the teachers at the focus of this study as described here, the promotion of written communication was notably absent. This may be considered surprising in light of the fact that writing is a

key language skill and therefore Written Presentation is one of the central domains of the English Curriculum in Israel. (Ministry of Education, 2001)

A possible explanation for the lack of emphasis on developing writing skills in the EFL classrooms observed is that writing, as a means of in-depth inquiry and development of ideas, is one of the more time-consuming language skills to teach and master, as it involves several stages - brainstorming ideas, composing drafts, polishing and rewriting. As noted earlier, teachers in this context are required to work with approved textbooks, and, for the most part, parents purchase the textbooks. The expectation of pupils, parents and School Principals alike is that substantial progress in the content of the textbook is made. The experience of this researcher indicates that teachers are highly conscious of this expectation, and therefore less attention is given to what may be considered time-consuming activity, of which the development of writing skills as a process is a main example.

5.2.4 Providing Instructional Coherence

Coherent instructional practices evident in the lessons of four teachers on a regular basis - Teachers 1, 3, 4, and 5, were executed in three main ways. The first aspect of instructional coherence, whereby the lesson focused on a limited number of topics - usually just one, was frequently displayed in the lessons of Teachers 1, 3 and 5. Topics include Yitzchak Rabin (Teacher 1), Robin Hood (Teacher 3) and birthdays (Teacher 5). The lessons of Teachers 1 and 5 displayed continuity as the second aspect of instructional coherence, whereby each stage or activity in the lesson served as a logical basis for the next. Both of these elements are compatible with the notion of instructional coherence as identified earlier by Chen and Li (2010:713).

Scaffolded instruction, considered a third aspect of instructional coherence, as also discussed earlier, was also evident in lessons observed. Scaffolding used for the purpose of supporting pupils in executing challenging tasks- including

completing a language exercise or comprehending concepts such as the difference between ordinal and cardinal numbers in English, was exercised on frequent occasions by Teachers 3 and 4.

The four teachers who provided elements of instructional coherence placed significant emphasis on both the need to do so and the underlying rationale for doing so in the follow-up interviews. Varying reasons were offered for including aspects of instructional coherence in their practice. Teacher 1 recognised the support that logical structure and scaffolding offer to less-able pupils. Teacher 3 noted that providing logic and order in her lessons helps to keep both her and her pupils focused. The main purpose for scaffolding instruction cited by Teacher 4, who uses the technique of scaffolding to lead pupils towards reaching their own conclusions about issues, resonates with previously mentioned observations of Wharton-McDonald et al (1998) whereby the effective teacher scaffolds students' thought processes by posing questions. Teacher 5 noted that she projects her own need for structure and logic into her teaching by planning lessons based on one area of focus. Hence it can be seen that both the techniques used in and the rationale for providing instructional coherence differ among the teachers. Nonetheless, despite these differences the findings indicate that the provision of instructional coherence as an overall concept is a significant element in the practice of the effective teachers studied.

This section of the discussion has presented the nature and extent of practices integral to the promotion of knowledge construction of the effective teachers observed. The practices referred to may be regarded as being firmly seated within the Vygotskian social constructivist perception of learning, as they facilitate the pupils' construction of knowledge by the teacher as the more knowledgeable other, largely through the use of spoken language. This perspective is, in turn, compatible with the theoretical foundations of models of pedagogy that promote a framework for effective

teaching practice through authenticity, as promoted by such as Newmann et al (1996).

The following section of this chapter will relate to further aspects of instructional practice that emerged from this study, albeit featuring minimally in the practice of the teachers overall in contrast to the aspects discussed above: those of providing instruction of relevance.

5.3 Relevance in Instruction

The notion of relevance may take varying forms and be integrated into instructional practice in different ways, as discussed in Chapter 2. The practices that fall under this category that arose frequently in this study were based on topics of relevance to the pupils' world and promoting learner autonomy through offering choice.

5.3.1 Providing Topics of Relevance

The findings reveal that two teachers frequently incorporated content of relevance to the world of the pupils into their practice by engaging the class in discussion about the topic at the focus of the lesson. Teacher 1 incorporated topics of relevance on two different levels – the topic of Rabin, for example, being of relevance to the national identity of her pupils, and such as that of the Simpsons as familiar television characters being of relevance to pupils' personal interests. Teacher 5 also incorporated practices that focused on pupils' personal interest but of a different nature, since instruction that related to the emotions and experiences of the pupils themselves was prominent in the lessons of Teacher 5.

While the practice of two teachers in this study reflects the significance of relevance in content, it cannot be considered as overwhelming evidence that wholly supports the central place the issue occupies in studies cited earlier. (See Newmann et al,1996, Roelofs and Terwell 1999, NSW DET 2003). This lack of parity may be due to the fact that while teachers of English in Israel

are at liberty to supplement course book content, they are obliged to use an approved course book from a limited range as the basis for instruction. As such, if the content of the lesson is based on course book content- as it was in several of the lessons of some of the teachers, and all of the lessons of other teachers observed, then it was not content chosen with that specific pupil population in mind.

5.3.2 Facilitating Learner Autonomy

Frequent evidence of facilitating learner autonomy was found to a limited extent in this study. Pupils were offered opportunities to make choices in the lessons of two teachers - Teachers 1 and 3. The nature of that choice differed, since in the lessons of Teacher 1 pupils were offered choice in the quantity of work to be completed - specifically the number of questions to be answered, whereas in the lessons of Teacher 3 choice of activity was offered. Only one teacher (Teacher 3) offered regular opportunity for pupils to manage their own time and engage in self-evaluation of performance.

As noted previously, the literature does not provide conclusive indication that pupil choice enhances learning outcomes. However it is generally accepted that promoting learner autonomy overall – of which pupil choice is one aspect, is conducive to improving educational achievements. The fact that provision for developing any aspect of learner autonomy was made in the practice of less than half of the teachers in this study does not reflect the importance of such skills as described in the literature - a revelation perhaps not totally unexpected.

Although there are some schools in Israel that do promote learner autonomy, such as democratic schools that have emerged in recent years, and there has been some attempt to promote learner autonomy through the use of technology, extensive educational reforms carried out in the Israeli

educational context have not, to date, been channeled towards the promotion of such competences at any level.

This section has considered aspects concerning relevance in learning that may be viewed as being seated within a situated perspective of teaching and learning as discussed earlier, in the practice of the teachers observed. Some element of relevance was present in the lessons of three teachers –Teachers 1, 3 and 5. The nature of the relevance and the extent to which it is manifested varies in the practice of each of the three teachers, thereby not offering clear indication of the importance of any specific aspect referred to. Nonetheless its presence overall suggests that the place of relevance in pedagogy in this context may contribute to learning outcomes and cannot therefore be overlooked. To qualify more precisely the nature and extent of the place of relevance in learning in the context of this study would demand further investigation.

Thomas (2011:197) reminds us that case study research 'is not about finding facts but (rather) gathering evidence.' It may be argued that a study on a broader scale than this enquiry is likely to render more reliable or comprehensive results. Nonetheless, this small-scale multiple case study has provided a unique lens into a specific context, thereby providing the evidence needed to formulate noteworthy conclusions in relation to the key research question, which, as will be recalled, considers how the effective EFL teacher in the Israeli elementary school teacher facilitates learning. A summary of key insights from this study as described in this chapter is provided below.

5.4 Summary

The findings show that the main instructional practices of the effective teachers observed for the purpose of this study focus on two areas- each to varying extents.

Firstly, providing opportunity for active participation in learning by constructing knowledge is a significant element of the overall practice. Facilitating the activation of prior knowledge by making connections- particularly to the main topic of the lesson, as a foundation for constructing new knowledge was a particularly prominent aspect. Opportunities for the use and development of higher order thinking skills were provided to some extent. Whole-class discussion, mediated by the teacher was used frequently as a vehicle to facilitate learning by sharing ideas and knowledge through consideration of topics and issues at an appropriate language level. Instructional coherence offering a structured learning experience that lends itself to sequential and systematic knowledge construction proved to be integral to the practice of most of the teachers. Varying techniques were used to activate and/or establish prior knowledge and provide instructional coherence. There is no conclusive evidence to suggest that any specific technique or strategy was used extensively in each instance, but rather that the extent to which provision is made for each aspect is of prime importance in the effort to enhance learning outcomes.

In placing the practices identified within a theoretical framework, convincing evidence of their being founded upon fundamental principles of a social constructivist perspective of learning as determined by Vygotsky is offered. This revelation resonates with Newmann et al's (1996) vision for effective instruction through the model of Authentic Pedagogy.

Secondly, instruction of relevance in two areas was evident in the practice of a limited number of teachers. These are the provision of practices centred on topics of relevance to the world of the pupil, and opportunities for developing the intrapersonal skill of learner autonomy, particularly by offering elements of choice within the learning experience. While this may be viewed as evidence of instruction of a situated nature, the extent to which this

perspective is incorporated in comparison to that of Social Constructivism is more limited, therefore revealing what may be considered as budding interest in relevance overall as integral to contemporary conceptions of what constitutes effective instruction, as described earlier.

The conclusions that emerged from this study, while of great interest in themselves, also promote further thought and consideration. The final chapter will examine some of these aspects.

Chapter 6

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

6.1 Introduction

This small scale study has been conducted and presented within the time and word constraints of the EdD programme at the University of Bath. Despite these inevitable limitations, insight into how effective EFL elementary school teachers in Israel facilitate learning was gained as a result of the comprehensive process presented previously.

The importance of a social constructivist perspective as a basis for effective learning and therefore teaching practice incorporating elements of authenticity was identified. Within this framework, the overall practice of the teachers at the focus of this study provided significant opportunities for pupils to engage in the process of knowledge construction, facilitated largely through class discussion and coherent instructional practices. The study also revealed the place of relevance in instruction in this context, albeit to a considerably lesser extent.

In contemplating both the process encountered and the conclusions drawn as a result of insights gained, this chapter relates to the perceived strengths and weaknesses of this study and implications for future considerations.

6.2 Strengths of the Study

There are three main issues that may be viewed as particular strengths of this study.

The first relates to the framework of authentic instruction within which the data collection and analysis were seated, from two perspectives. Firstly the framework is supported by clearly defined perspectives of contemporary learning theory thus offering firm theoretical foundations for the study.

Secondly the model of authentic instruction, as promoted in its original form by Newmann et al (1996), offers a flexible basis for instruction. The framework does not dictate the use of specific instructional strategies, but rather embraces key concepts that may be extended and/or translated into practice tailored to a variety of needs and conditions at the discretion of the teacher. The varied ways in which connecting to prior knowledge was facilitated by the teachers is testimony to the flexibility inherent in the framework for authentic instruction.

A second strength of the study concerns the open nature of the observations conducted in the classrooms. In aiming to identify prominent practices of the effective EFL Israeli elementary school teacher, the classroom observations focused on noting as much of the activity and interaction in each lesson as was possible to do by a single researcher. The accounts were, as mentioned previously, examined and re-examined in the search for emerging patterns, thereby allowing the researcher to ascertain key aspects of practice in the course of the analysis process.

While the data collection and analysis were informed by the literature reviewed, they were not based on pre-determined criteria. Had this been the case, then the process may have been one of validation of pre-conceived ideas of what is likely to constitute effective practice. Thus, while acknowledging that it is not possible to eliminate researcher bias completely in qualitative research practices, the open-ended observations employed in this qualitative case study allowed for the researcher to engage in 'discovery rather than confirmation,' emphasised by Merriam (1998:19) as a key feature of qualitative methods within case study research.

A further strength of this study lies in its collective nature. As noted earlier, it is widely recognised that generalisations are rarely possible from single case

studies. The multiple case study however, as also discussed earlier, offers more opportunity for applying the findings in a broader context. In this study the findings from each case were recorded and analysed in turn, and presented in Chapter 4 as a 'within-case analysis' providing 'a detailed description of each case and themes within the case' (Creswell, 2007:75). These perceptions then served as the basis for the subsequent 'thematic analysis across the cases,' (Creswell 2007:75), thus providing the cross-case analysis presented in the previous chapter. The process of the within-case and cross-case analyses has thus provided valuable initial insights beyond each case individually.

6.3 Weaknesses of the Study

There are two main issues that may be worthy of reconsideration were this study to be replicated. The first aspect relates to the lack of pupil voice. While this perspective may have been attained through other methods- such as by inviting pupils to complete written questionnaires, this researcher felt that face to face contact would offer opportunity for pupils to express their feelings and opinions in more depth and allow the researcher to follow through on issues as they arose. As such, pupils were interviewed, as will be recalled, at permitted and what proved to be limited times during lessons. However, the contribution of the information gleaned from these interviews proved to be of insufficient value to warrant inclusion in the data analysis. In retrospect, it may have been preferable to have interviewed pupils after having analysed the data collected, and relate to specific issues that arose from the analysis in discussion with pupils. In this way the questions posed to pupils could have been more focused on and may have rendered more valuable insights into the significance of the key practices identified, from the learner perspective.

A second consideration that may have improved the study relates to the observation schedule. In order to weave the field work into the full-time work schedule of this part-time researcher, the visits to schools were, as noted earlier, largely conducted at weekly intervals. On analyzing and discussing the findings, the notion of instructional coherence as an important facet of effective practice surfaced. Had consecutive lessons been observed in each classroom, it may have been possible and interesting to have considered the issue of instructional coherence from an additional and potentially valuable perspective - between lessons rather than only within a single lesson, thus offering further insight into the place of instructional coherence as an effective practice.

6.4 Implications

In reference to various reforms carried out in recent years and referred to earlier that focus on 'fixing the plaster- each time in a different part,' Ben-David (2007b:2) draws a parallel with the 'structural reinforcement' carried out on the Tower of Pisa and efforts to fix the 'tower of education in Israel.' This pertinent analogy highlights the failed attempts to significantly enhance learning outcomes in Israel to date, such as through additional teaching hours, integration of technology, and new or revised curricula mentioned previously.

The literature indicates, as also noted earlier, that a consideration of instructional practice is crucial in attempts to enhance learning outcomes. The revelations, in terms of the prominent instructional practices that facilitate learning in this study, offer insight of value on two levels - to the professional practice of this researcher and in considering how educational achievement in Israel in a broader context might be enhanced.

6.4.1 Implications for the Professional Practice of this Researcher

The professional duties of this researcher demand the frequent assessment of teaching and teacher performance. In the past, this practice was informed by knowledge gained from sources such as personal teaching experience, accepted practice in this context and research conducted in contexts removed from this one. However, the conclusions drawn from this study have provided the researcher with context-specific, research-based insight that was previously lacking, to better inform her practice and support observations and subsequent decisions. The insights gleaned are already being integrated by this researcher into the assessment procedures used and in-depth discussion with student teachers, practicing teachers and teacher counselors alike, in ongoing efforts to enhance learning outcomes.

6.4.2 Implications for a Broader Context

Ladwig (2005:71) states that pedagogy cannot be improved in the absence of a model to guide and serve as a focus for appropriate change. The key practices identified in this study stem from, as will be recalled, generic learning theory and instructional ideas pertinent to such theory, which have shown to serve varying contexts. Therefore, while identifying the relevance of these frameworks within the specific context at the focus of this enquiry, there is significant possibility that the practices identified would be applicable to the broader context in which this study is placed. In the quest to enhance learning outcomes in Israel overall, and acknowledging that a focus on pedagogical practice is called for, this perspective cannot be overlooked. The conclusions drawn from this study could serve as initial foundations upon which to proceed in developing a much-needed contemporary model of pedagogy to this end.

Realising such a vision would necessitate further investigation into the extent to which the main practices identified in this study are employed in the wider

community of English teachers in the Israeli school system, and similarly by teachers of other subjects. Doing so would provide a significant basis upon which to develop a model of pedagogy that would reflect the needs of the Israeli educational context. Were pedagogues and policy makers to acknowledge that substantial improvement of educational outcomes in Israel overall is primarily dependent on effective teaching practice, and thereby explore the nature and identify key aspects of such practice on a national level, it would be possible to develop a model of pedagogy that would serve to secure the foundations of an educational system that promotes enhanced achievement for the future generations of Israel.

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Appendix 1

The Procedure for the Selection of the Specific Teachers as Cases

Stage in the Procedure	Source of Recommendation	Recommendation based on:	Comments and/or Points of Consideration
1	The relevant Regional Inspectors for English	Largely, although not exclusively, visits to schools, observation of lessons	
2	The average scores on the national English 'Meitzav' tests referred to in Chapter 1 in the schools of the teachers identified by the relevant Regional Inspectors.	The school's English 'Meitzav' test scores consistently above the national average in recent years in both internally and externally administered tests.	<p>1. At the time, this information was not available to the general public. As such in asking the Regional Inspectors to recommend teachers this criterion was cited but the test scores were not divulged. In some cases, at the initial on-site meeting between the researcher and the School Principal, the Principal volunteered the scores of both internally and externally administered tests in recent years.</p> <p>2. There is sometimes only one English teacher in the Israeli elementary school, and thus all classes are inevitably taught English by the same teacher. This was the case in two of the schools in this study. In the three other schools, where there is more than one teacher, a rotation system occurs, whereby each teacher teaches different grade levels each year. As such, no one teacher can assume full responsibility for the achievements of any one class. However, the teachers examined have, in past years, taught a variety of grade levels, including those preceding the national tests. As such their contribution to the pupil's higher than average national test scores was considered relevant.</p>
3	This researcher	The researcher had no previous professional or personal acquaintance with the teacher, or knowledge of the instructional practices employed in the classroom.	This criterion is important in the attempt to avoid inevitable prior conceptions of the quality of the teaching that may have been present had there been any prior connection, that may have influenced the direction of the study. One teacher suggested by the first Regional Inspector was known to the researcher in a professional

			capacity. The researcher therefore considered it inappropriate that this teacher be included in this study.
4	The School Principal	A high level of satisfaction and appreciation by the School Principal of the quality of the teacher's work.	<p>1. In contrast to the Regional Inspector who sees the English teacher 'in action' at sparse intervals, the working relationship between the School Principal and the teacher is naturally far more intensive. Hence, while the view of the Regional Inspector was the initial recommendation for the teachers selected, the confirmation of this view by the School Principal was highly relevant. Although the researcher did not ask the School Principals outright about the extent of their satisfaction with the teacher's professional performance, the Principals in all but one case volunteered this information at the initial on-site meeting with this researcher. In the case of the fifth teacher, the School Principal was newly appointed to the position and was therefore only able to state that she understood from the previous Principal the extent of the high quality of the teacher's work.</p> <p>2. In addition to recommending their teachers, the School Principals were also asked for their consent in allowing the researcher access to the classrooms in their schools. This occurred prior to the first visit to the school, and the researcher presented relevant documents to the school principal on the first visit- the outline of the research (Appendix 9), and written permission and conditions from the General Scientist's Office (Appendix 10).</p>

Appendix 2

Professional Profiles of the English Teachers at the Focus of the Study

Teacher	Academic Qualifications	No. of years of relevant experience	Additional related responsibilities
1	B.Ed M.A.	19	Pedagogical Counselor for student English teachers
2	B.Ed At the time of the interview was taking a course in Educational Management as a prerequisite for becoming a School Principal in Israel.	16	Previously a counsellor for English teachers under the auspices of the English Inspectorate. Currently a 'Master teacher' for student English teachers
3	Certificate of Education B.A.	27	Homeroom teacher
4	BA in Psychology Teaching certificate in Psychology and English.	10	In the past also worked as a homeroom teacher Currently also teaches in after-school informal enrichment program in local community centres.
5	BA in English Literature Teaching certificate for English	14	

Appendix 3

The Schools and their Populations

School	Teacher	Location	Population
A	1	City 1	Mixed low/ average socio-economic background.
B	2	City 1	Low socio-economic background. Many immigrant pupils
C	3	Kibbutz	Mostly average socio-economic background
D	4 and 5	City 2	Mixed average/high socio economic background

Appendix 4

The Tool Used to Record Activity During Classroom Observations.

Classroom Observations

Date:_____ Time:_____ Lesson
no._____ observed.

Teacher's name :_____ School :_____

Class:_____ No. of pupils present: _____ Coursebook: _____

Background of the class:

Background to the lesson observed – Where it is in sequence in relation to
the topic/course book?

What came before?

What will come after?

Time on clock– beginning and end of activity	Description of activity Teacher actions Pupil actions Comments/questions by teacher and/or pupils Organisation/Level of interaction Materials used

Appendix 5

Example of Completed Account from Classroom Observation

Classroom Observations

Key to Abbreviations:

T- the teacher

P/I- one pupil

P/Is- more than one pupil

M, N, L, S, B, C, G - initial letters of names of specific pupils

Date: 8/03/2011 Time: 11.00 Visit no.1 Lesson 1

Teacher's name: Teacher 5 School: D

Class: 6 No. of pupils present: 32 Coursebook: Panorama

Background of the class: sensitive, clever kids, not quiet (according to the perception of Teacher 5 perception)

Background to the lesson observed

Where it is in sequence in relation to the topic/course book?

T- This is the first lesson on this song.

What came before?

What will come after?

T- I'll do another song that deals with the same issue – maybe violence, because the pupils are sometimes violent to each other- relating to the same issue from a different point of view.

Time on clock– beginning and end of activity	Description of activity Teacher actions Pupil actions Comments/questions by teacher and/or pupils Organisation/Level of interaction Materials used
11.00	<p>T- Good morning. How are you today?</p> <p>P/Is respond.</p> <p>T- I'm giving you a song. Please write your name</p> <p>P/Is pass pages out.</p> <p>T- Do you know the song? What is the name of the song?</p> <p>P/I- Beautiful</p> <p>T- Why?</p> <p>P/I tells about a beautiful woman.</p> <p>T- And what about you?</p> <p>P/I- because we are beautiful</p> <p>T- You are beautiful</p> <p>P/I- Because we improve all the time</p> <p>P/I- Because we are beautiful not just outside but also inside.</p> <p>T- Great, good answers. Let's listen to the song and fill in the words.</p>

		<p>T plays song on CD. P/s fill in words. T writes some words from the song on board in English and Hebrew while p/s listen T walks around looking at p/s pages while pupils work. T- The tape is not good. I'm sorry. Let's start again</p>
	11.06	<p>T plays Cd again. T writes more words on board under heading 'Beautiful': Sun/mistakes/wonderful/puzzle, words, go, way, your, friends, beautiful, today etc T- M- what is breath?</p>
	11.10	<p>P/I 'linshom ` (<i>Hebrew translation</i>) T plays song again. T goes round again to help p/s with hands up. Some p/ls singing song.</p>
	11.14	<p>T- Don't you bring me down today. First of all I want to ask you – how did you complete the sentences? There are many words in the song- right N? T plays the beginning of the song. The first sentence you can hardly hear. P/ls sitting with hands up. T- L? T- Wonderful. L comes up and circles and numbers the word on the board. Next p/l comes up to number and circle word P/I- pain T- Pain – what is it? Hands up P/I- ke'ev (<i>Hebrew translation</i>)</p> <p>T continues to play the song and stops for p/s to come up to board to circle words. T- S? S- Friends T- Friends...no...? 6 T- Pay attention – it's not to feel –lehargish but lemaleh- (<i>Hebrew translation</i>)</p> <p>P/ls continue to fill in words T stops tape at certain point. T- This was very difficult P/I- mistakes T- Very good mistakes- tayuout (<i>Hebrew translation</i>) T- Sun is no.....? P/I- 17 T- Are you sure? P/s – Yes</p>
	11.20	<p>T- So do you like this song? I like this song very much. It's a beautiful song. What is the song about? Ssshhhh (p/s noisy) T- al ma hashir l'd'atchem? (<i>English translation- what do you think the song is about?</i>) What do you take from the song? P//s – People are beautiful inside T- ok P/I- People say they are ugly and they are beautiful inside T- Sometimes people can insult you. What is insult? Ma'aliv (<i>Hebrew translation</i>) So when you feel bad so words can.....bring you down P/I- It explains about believing in yourself – beautiful inside.</p>

11.31	<p> T- Good . Do you remember about the monster? She is beautiful outside but not inside T- Turn your page. Look at the first question. B? P/I – Can I answer? (asks in Hebrew) T- First read the question P/I reads T- Good . Let’s write your answers. P/I- I believe in myself P/I- The main idea of the song knows who is she – that she is beautiful outside and inside T- kol hakavod C. (English translation- well done C) P/I- The main idea of the song is you are beautiful ...words can bring P/I- I want to add to what C said T- Great answer. I think it’s enough. Ok what should I write? You have to believe in yourself. Be true to yourself. Don’t be...to what...help me please...insulting to others? Words can bring me down...words. Don’t copy from the board. You have wonderful ideas. P/I reads next question T revises the instruction, writes ‘ma’aliv’ in Hebrew under ‘insulting’. B do you want to give us an idea? B- don’t be hard P/I- no T—It’s logical but not according to the song. Aaah it’s hard to breath. Don’t be ashamed – ma ze ashamed? (English translation -What is ashamed?) P/I gives response in Hebrew T- the other word P/I-insecure What is insecure? P/I responds by giving Hebrew translation T writes on board – ashamed, insecure, wonderful </p> <p> T- No. 3 is so interesting. Who wants to read it? P/I reads the question T- Oh can you find the answer in the song? P/s- No T- What can you do? P/I- Encourage him to be himself P/I- I think we need to say to your friend that she is beautiful inside and outside T- M M - ani omeret machma’ot (English translation -I say compliments) T- elicits...gives.... P/I- I think we can compliment a chavera . (English translation- friend) Can I say it in English? T- say it toch ciday (English translation – Say it within your sentence) P/I- continues in English T gives word insult when she gets stuck T- Great answers P/I- I need to say my friend... T- Great answers </p> <p> T writes on board – ‘You can say to your friends compliments and encourage him/her T- You can stay with your own answers. </p>
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11.34	P/I- echazek (English translation- to reinforce) T- No. 4. I think B almost answered this for us. Who wants to read no. 4? P/I points out mistake in spelling of 'friend' on board
11.36	T- Oh sorry. Thank you. T corrects word P/I reads answer to question 4
11.38	T-What does it mean 'The sun will always shine?'
11.40	P/I explains T- great answer Another p/I gives answer. T- Ok so can you repeat yourself? P/I gives an answer T- Great. No matter what other people say – be happy. Great. And the last one? Do you want to add? T- Ok you can stay with your answers. G can you repeat your answer? G says answer. T writes answer on board Bell goes. T- Complete for tomorrow if you haven't done it. I enjoyed you a lot. Bye

Appendix 6

Questions for Pupils

1. What have you been asked to do?
2. Can you tell me what you need to do?
3. How do you plan to do it?
4. How do you feel about this task? Why?
5. What do you think you are learning?
6. Do you like this?
7. What do you like about it?
8. Is it interesting?
9. What do you like about it?

Appendix 7

Questions for the Post Observation Teacher Interviews

Questions for the Teacher

Date _____ **Lesson no.** _____

1. What were your main objectives for this lesson?
2. Was this a successful lesson? Why/why not?
3. Did you feel you met those objectives? Why/Why not?
4. Why did you do?
5. What do you feel contributed to.....?
5. Do you tend to includein your lessons on a regular basis? Why?

Appendix 8

Example of Post Data-Analysis Interviews

Teacher 1

26.12.2011

Below is the list of practices considered key to effective teaching that are prominent in your lessons as I identified from my observations. – ie they feature either extensively or sometimes in your lessons.

To think about while reading...

- a. Do you agree with each point?
- b. Why do you engage in this practice?

- 1. While teaching you provide opportunities for pupils to make connections to their prior knowledge/experiences by

- a. Making direct connections by e.g. giving info, reminding students,
- b. Eliciting information from pupils using open questions
- c. Eliciting information from pupils using closed questions

(In reference to 1a, 1b, 1c)

'I do that a lot. I make connections by relating to previous vocabulary items we studied- for example when I introduce new vocabulary I relate to vocabulary they have already learned. That is why I chose the book 'Panorama' because they teach new vocabulary and base it on previous vocabulary.'

- 2. Areas of prior knowledge and experience that you relate to are:

- a. To the main content/topic of lesson
- b. To phonics/sound-letter rules

(In reference to both) – *'I agree.'*

(In reference to 2b)- *'I do that a lot – it helps with their reading.'*

- 3. Your lessons:

- a. Focus on a limited number of topics (as opposed to several topics in the same lesson)

'In general yes. What I do from time to time I like to sum up. When I sum up I relate to several topics – for example before a mapping test because I want to take everything we do until now and summarise it. But in general you are right. When I teach a topic I relate to that topic.'

- b. Focus on topics that are relevant to the pupils' own world, culture and interests

'Yes as much as I can. This I learned from a teacher when I was a student. She taught in a difficult neighbourhood with difficult pupils and she asked

'How can I motivate my pupils?' She took everything she taught and connected it to their lives. I took this from her. Even if I have pupils from a good population I do this because it is meaningful, it stays in their minds.'

- c. Are coherent- parts of lesson are logically connected to each other, linked to same central theme, or focus on the same language skill**

'For me it's obvious'

- d. Display continuity-show progression, flow, help pupils to build knowledge systematically**

'Also this is obvious for me. I build a topic. I don't build a lesson. It's connected to 'c'. The minute I build a topic I think of the vocabulary and the skills, I build it around the domains. I'm also a very systematic person and if things are not systematically organized I can't teach. Things have to be systematic and I have to understand the rationale behind what I teach. This is so important. The progression is connected to long term planning and it's crucial in a teachers' work. First of all I do that because this is the way I think. Second I think that in this way pupils will be able to remember things.'

- 4. You scaffold the learning process for your pupils in order to comprehend a text.**

'Yes in many different ways. I don't think there is one way to scaffold the learning process. You can do that in many ways. You have heterogeneous classes. The good pupils will understand automatically but we have to think about the average and low level pupils. And sometimes, pupils are shy and they don't ask, even the good pupils. So the minute I do that- ask questions in order to scaffold the learning process, they understand. I have to be sure they understood. I ask- do you understand? Is it clear now?'

- 5. You engage pupils in oral 'sustained examination' of topics – (discussion)**

'Yes I do that many times. It depends on the topic. I do that because in this way we use speaking. I do that one- on-one. Teacher-pupils, but also pupils-pupils. I like to have discussions with my 6th graders. I learn a lot about their own world, what they know and what they would like to know. Still don't know. I think the most important thing is I tell them I don't know everything. I think that today the teacher's job is not to give the knowledge. If I don't know I tell them: 'Ok- here is an opportunity to investigate' and I send the pupils to find the answers.'

- 6. You ask challenging questions that require responses beyond the level of recall.**

'This is once again connected to the fact that I teach heterogeneous classes – those above average. No. 4 is scaffolding for the weak pupils so it's an integration of this and that. If I built my lessons only on challenging

questions I would have lost my weak learners. The fact that I have this shows me that I cater for weak and advanced.'

7. You offer pupils a choice of quantity in your lessons.

'I think again it is connected to the fact that I teach heterogeneous classes and it helps the weak learners. They are not intimidated. We give them homework without thinking if they will be able to do everything. I do something else – I approach very weak learners and say 'Do only this one' while the pupils are working – it may only mean copying but at least they can do something. And I help them of course.'

8. You provide focused vocabulary instruction.

9. You provide opportunities for pupils to read silently.

(In response to points 8 and 9 together):

'What I learnt in college many years ago is that when you teach reading comprehension you first teach the essential vocabulary, without Hebrew, with pictures, the written form, the oral form etc. - These words are from the story. What do you think the story is about?' Then ask the pupils to read silently and give them a purpose to read. The minute you read aloud it is not reading comprehension. I think that you can read aloud but it has a different purpose. We want our pupils to be independent readers. If I read aloud the whole year we are missing an opportunity to help them be independent readers. I add to that the extensive reading throughout the year.'

Appendix 9

Outline of the Research Submitted to the Chief Scientist of the Ministry of Education Upon Request for Permission to Conduct Research in State Schools

Description of Research

Frances Sokel, EdD Student, University of Bath, England

Working Title:

'Effective teaching of English in the Israeli elementary school today: Investigating key elements of practice. '

The Background

In the progressively more competitive global world of today 'Education is increasingly important to the success of both individuals and nations....' (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Whereas in the past, basic knowledge and skills were sufficient to equip pupils for such future success 'It is an emphasis on what students can do with knowledge, rather than what units of knowledge they have, that best describes the essence of 21st century skills.' (Silva, 2008)

However, test results according to both international assessment tools, such as TIMMS and PISA and nationally based standardised tests clearly indicate that, in the past decade the Israeli education has failed to adequately provide for this need, as indicated by Ben David (2008). As such, as in other countries where 'Governments are under pressure to improve the quality, efficiency and relevance of their education systems,' (Kovacs, 1998), the issue of how to improve educational achievements, with an emphasis on the development of critical thinking skills, is at the forefront of national debate in Israel. It is in my professional capacity of Regional Inspector and Teacher Educator for English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction in the Jewish sector in Israel that this issue is of prime concern.

English as a Foreign Language in the Israeli School System

English, as the language of international communication, is an integral element of the Israeli school curriculum from Grade 4 (age 10). Pupils are required to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of English in order to receive complete high school matriculation. This, in turn serves as a prerequisite for entrance to higher education in Israel. Thus, the path to prosperity at both the individual and national level in the present global world demands that, in addition to the acquisition of critical thinking skills as suggested above, pupils attain a suitable level of English in school.

Quality Teaching and Educational Achievement

While there may be a myriad of contributing factors, research consistently indicates that the quality of teaching is central to successful learning outcomes. (See for example Cochran-Smith, 2003, Darling-Hammond, 2006). In efforts to identify the essential ingredients of quality teaching, attempts to construct 'an orderly knowledge base linking teacher behavior to student achievement' (Brophy, 1986), have been made by such as Shulman (1987), Grossman (1990) and Turner-Bisset (2001). Nonetheless, as indicated for example by Hopkins and Stern (1996) and Turner-Bisset (2001), despite such efforts there continues to be limited agreement as to what it is that constitutes effective teaching practice. This lack of consensus may be attributed, in part at least, to the observations of Brophy (1986) who states that '...effective teaching involves the orchestration of many teaching skills suited to

particular situations rather than continued performance of a few presumably generic 'effective teaching behaviors'.

Brophy's (1986) perception is highlighted by the range of factors considered central to effective teaching that have emerged through relevant research undertaken in varying contexts, by, for example Dolezal, et al (2003), Brown and Medway (2007), van de Grift (2007) and Kyriakides and Antoniou, (2009). The range of contexts may include the geographical and/or cultural setting, the socio-economic background of pupils, the subject matter taught, the level of schooling (elementary or secondary), and the point in time in which the research is carried out.

Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1995) note that 'There is increasing recognition that, although much can be learned from international and comparative studies of teacher effectiveness conducted in different countries, the results of such studies are unlikely to be directly transferable to other contexts.' Hence, while it may be possible to draw some parallels from research undertaken in different contexts, it is clear that attempts to improve the quality of the teaching of English as a foreign language in the Israeli elementary school must focus on teachers and teaching in the relevant context. The research procedure described below has been designed with this premise in mind.

The Research Design

Based on the notion that effective instruction at the elementary school level is likely to provide the basis for successful learning outcomes in English at later levels of schooling, this qualitative study will focus on the practice of effective elementary school teachers in Israel. The research will relate to the following points:

- How do teachers effectively make provision for the development of skills and knowledge needed by pupils in the current era in the EFL elementary Israeli classroom?
- Which categories of professional knowledge do teachers draw upon in order to inform this practice?

The research will be conducted during the school years 2010-2012. An initial survey will be administered in order to establish how the national English Inspectorate perceives the effective elementary school English teacher in Israel today. The Inspectors will be asked to identify what they consider to be the most significant aspects of the practice of the English teacher that are likely to enhance learning in the current era. The most prominent recurring aspects identified will be extracted from the responses and compared with the findings from the literature.

The next stage of the study will focus on the case studies of four teachers in the specified context. The teachers selected will be recognized as effective practitioners based on:

- a. the observations of the Inspectorate and/or other professionals in the field (such as school principals, teacher mentors) and
- b. the results of national tests (Meitzav) in English in Grade 5 (age 11) .

The studies will focus on attempts to identify those practices that show evidence of effective teaching in light of the criteria identified previously. The collection of data will be conducted throughout the case studies by varying means. These include the observation of English lessons, examination of relevant documents such as year, unit and lesson plans, and assessment tools prepared by the teachers, and open interviews with the teachers and pupils in relation to events observed and documents examined. Where relevant, the observations will be recorded through thick description. The data will be analysed through the categorisation of incidents and information gleaned from the field according to themes and patterns as they emerge, which indicate or challenge evidence of quality teaching today. The

areas of focus for the collection of data that indicate such practice will be determined in light of responses from the Inspectorate as referred to above, and the review of the literature, which is currently in progress.

As mentioned earlier, a focus on improving achievements while developing higher order thinking skills is currently taking place within the Israeli education system. In the field of English, while improvements are needed at all levels, emphasis is being placed on the fostering of such skills at the high school level. It is hoped that, by conducting this research project, some insight as to what aspects of the EFL elementary school teacher's practice in Israel are most likely to contribute to improved educational achievement and the development of thinking skills in the current era will be gained. In the event that this is the case, the information gleaned may be useful in designing professional development programmes for elementary school English teachers in Israel at both the pre and in-service stages, with the intention of improving the quality of instruction in this context.

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Appendix 10

Permission and Conditions for Executing Research in State Schools from the Chief Scientist of the Ministry of Education in Israel

מדינת ישראל
משרד החינוך
לשכת המדען הראשי

עמוד 1 מתוך 2
ירושלים, כ"ב אדר תש"ע
08 מרץ 2010
רו 345

היתר לעריכת מחקר בנושא
"הוראת האנגלית בבית הספר היסודי"
בביצוע גב' פראן סוקל

תוקפו של ההיתר הוא לשנת הלימודים תשע"א בלבד.

במסמך זה ההתייחסות לכל אלה שלא מזהים לפי שם היא בלשון זכר. זאת מטעמי נוחות בלבד, והכוונה היא גם לנקבה, אם לא מצוין אחרת.

לצורך הכניסה לבית הספר יומצא העתק של מסמך זה למנהל בית הספר

המסגרת שבה נערך המחקר: לימודיה של עורכת המחקר לקראת תואר שלישי באוניברסיטת באת'
שבאנגליה (University of Bath)

מטרת המחקר: לבחון את האופן שבו מיישמים מורים לאנגלית את תכנית הלימודים בשיעוריהם, וכן לבחון את האופן שבו משתקף בשיעור הידע האישי של המורה בתחום הוראת האנגלית.

עיקרי המרכיבים של המחקר לעניין היתר זה:

הנבדקים: מורים לאנגלית המלמדים בכיתות ד'-י' ותלמידיהם

כלי המחקר: תצפיות ב-6 שיעורי אנגלית, ראיון עם הנבדקים (מורים ותלמידיהם), ניתוח תוכן של מערכי השיעורים שהוכנו על ידי המורים הנבדקים.

הבקשה לביצוע המחקר הנ"ל נבדקה על ידי לשכת המדען הראשי, ונמצאה עומדת בכל התנאים הנוגעים בדבר הקבועים בנוהל "אישור איסוף מידע במוסדות החינוך". לאור זאת הוחלט להיתר את איסוף המידע המבוקש שלעיל בקרב מורים לאנגלית המלמדים בכיתות ד'-י' ותלמידיהם בבתי ספר שבמחוז המרכז ובמחוז חיפה בלבד. זאת בכפיפות לכל התנאים שלהלן שלקיומם אחראית עורכת המחקר ומנהל בית הספר הנוגע בדבר:

1. הנבדקים (המורים לאנגלית ותלמידיהם) אינם כפופים לצוות המחקר או לכל אדם אחר הפועל מטעמו ואינם תלויים בהם בכל דרך אחרת.
2. איסוף המידע לא ייערך בפועל על ידי חבר צוות של בית הספר או על ידי בעל תפקיד אחר הפועל במסגרת בית הספר או על ידי תלמיד הלומד במוסד.
3. תכונת זכותם של הנבדקים להחליט לא להשתתף במחקר וזכותם של אלה שהחלו להשתתף בו להחליט לא להמשיך את השתתפותם בכל עת שירצו, וזאת בלי שייפגעו בעקבות החלטותיהם באופן כלשהו. את כל הנ"ל תבהיר עורכת המחקר לנבדקים לפני תחילת המחקר.
4. הנבדקים לא יתבקשו למסור פרטים כלשהם שיאפשרו את זיהוים, ולא יירשם לצורכי המחקר כל פרט מזהה על אודותיהם.
5. התלמידים ייבחרו לצורכי הראיון באופן אקראי, מקרב אלה שהביעו את רצונם להתראיין. היותה של הבחירה הנ"ל אקראית תובהר לכלל תלמידי הכיתה ע"י עורכת המחקר.

מדינת ישראל
משרד החינוך
לשכת המדען הראשי

עמוד 2 מתוך 2

6. הראיון עם התלמידים לא יארך יותר מ-10 דקות ויתבצע במהלך השיעורים הנצפים, בזמן המוקדש לעבודה עצמית.
7. הראיון עם המורים לא יערך במהלך שעות עבודתם במוסד החינוכי.

למען הסר ספק, יובהר כדלהלן:

- עורכת המחקר התחייבה בכתובים לפני לשכת המדען הראשי לא לפרסם את ממצאי המחקר באופן שיאפשר את זיהוי הנבדקים ואת זיהוי בתי הספר שבמסגרתם נאסף המידע הנדון.
- ההיתר ניתן אך ורק לאיסוף המידע באמצעות כלי המחקר שהוצגו לבדיקה בלשכת המדען הראשי, במתכונת שהותרה לשימוש.
- אם איסוף המידע מתוכנן להיערך על ידי נציגים של עורכת המחקר, יהיה על הנציגים להציג לפני מנהל בית הספר ייפוי כוח הנוגע בדבר, בחתימתה.
- אין במכתב זה משום חיווי דעה של לשכת המדען הראשי על איכותו של המחקר.
- לא נדרש היתר נפרד מטעם המחוז.

רנה איסיזון
מרכזת בכירה (בקרה ומעקב)

Appendix 11

Details of On-Site Visits

Teacher	Date of observations	Lessons observed	No. of pupils interviewed during the lesson	Interviews with teachers following the observations	Date of post data analysis interview with teacher
1	19/10/ 2010	Grade 6 8.00-8.50	2	Both lessons were discussed in the face to face interview after the second lesson observed.	26/12/2011
		Grade 6 8.55-9.40	1		
	26/10/2010	Grade 6 8.00-8.50	0	Both lessons were discussed in the face to face interview after the second lesson observed.	
		Grade 6 8.55-9.40	1		
	5/11/2010	Grade 6 8.00-8.50	0	Both lessons were discussed in the face to face interview after the second lesson observed.	
		Grade 6 8.55-9.40	0		
2	12/11/2010	Grade 4 10.15-11.00	0	Both lessons were discussed in the face to face interview at the end of the school day.	17/02/2012
		Grade 6 11.00-11.45	0		
	17/12/2010	Grade 5 8.00-8.50	0	Both lessons were discussed in the face to face interview at the end of the school day.	
		Grade 5 8.50–9.40	2		
	7/01/2011	Grade 4 10.15-11.00	0	Both lessons were discussed in the face to face interview at the end of the school day.	
		Grade 6 11.00-11.45	0		
3	25/01/2011	Grade 6 8.00-8.45	1	Both lessons were discussed in the face to face interview at the end of the school day.	17/02/2012
		Grade 5 10.00-10.45	0		
	8/02/2011	Grade 5 10.00-10.45	2 pupils interviewed together	Both lessons were discussed in the face to face interview at the end of the school day.	
		Grade 5 10.45-11.00	1		
	22/02/2011	Grade 6 8.00-8.45	1	The lesson was discussed in a telephone interview on the evening following the visit.	
4	8/03/2011	Grade 4 8.50 – 9.35	0	Both lessons were discussed in the face to face interview at the end of the school day.	9/02/2012
		Grade 4 12.00-12.45	1		
	29/03/2011	Grade 4 8.50-9.35	1	All three lessons were discussed in the face to face interview at the end of the school day.	
		Grade 4 10.05- 10.55	0		
	Grade 4 10.55 -11.45	0			
5	8/03/2011	Grade 6 10.55- 11.45	0	The lesson was discussed in a telephone interview on the evening following the visit.	9/02/2012
	5/04/2011	Grade 5 8.00-8.45	1	All three lessons were discussed in the face to face interview at the end of the school day.	
		Grade 5 8.50-9.35	1		
		Grade 5 10.05 – 10.55	0		

Appendix 12

Table for Summary of Practices

Key

- Frequently – used at least once, and often several times, in at least half of the lessons observed
- Infrequently- used in less than half of the lessons observed
- Not used at all

Teacher __			From the Observations			Quotes/ references from teacher interviews	Quotes/ references from pupil interviews	Notes
			Used Frequently	Used Infrequently	Not used at all			
Makes connections to prior knowledge	Instructional practices used	Teacher makes direct connections – song/ info etc.						
		Teacher elicits info from pupils using open questions to make connections to prior knowledge/ experiences						

			Teacher elicits info from pupils using closed questions to make connections to prior knowledge/ experiences						
			Teacher uses prompts p/s to activate prior knowledge and elicit responses						
			Teacher asks p/s to make connections						
	Categories of prior knowledge to	World knowledge	Pupils prior knowledge of content of related to main content of lesson/what is being learned						

			World knowledge- not ness focus of lesson – maybe opportunistic teaching						
		What we have learned in class before - content	Connection to diff topic related to/ studied in class that is relevant to the content being studied now						
			Content of lesson knowledge						
		Content of lesson knowledg e	Knowledge of phonics/ sound letter rules						
			Knowledge of alphabet						

			Knowledge of spelling						
			Grammar/ language structure						
			Vocabulary						
			Knowledge of mother tongue						

			From the observations			Quotes/ references from teacher interviews	Quotes/ references from pupil interviews	Notes
			Used Frequently	Used Infrequently	Not used at all			
Provides opportunities for using HOTS- (thinking skills beyond recall and comprehension)	Prediction	Orally						
	Justifying	Orally						
	Inferring	Orally						
	Logical reasoning	Orally						
	Categorising	Orally						
		Reading						
	explaining	Orally						
		In writing						
	Application	Orally						
		In writing						
Summary								

Teacher 1		From the observations			Quotes/ references from teacher interviews	Quotes/ references from pupil interviews	Notes
		Used Frequently	Used Infrequently	Not used at all			
Conducts the lesson around limited number of topics							
Provides a coherent and cohesive lesson							
Provides opportunity for elaborated communication	Oral						
	Written						
Teacher structures challenging tasks/concepts							
Summary							

Teacher 1			From the observations			Quotes/ references from teacher interviews	Quotes/ references from pupil interviews	Notes
			Used Frequently	Used Infrequently	Not used at all			
Lesson content	The teacher focuses on topics that relate to:	Real world happenings/ situations						
		The pupils' own world/culture/ interest						
	The products produced are of personal and/or social significance	Spoken discourse						
		Written discourse						
Interpersonal skills	The teacher provides opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively							
Intrapersonal skills	The teacher facilitates opportunities to	Offering choice						

	develop learner independence by:	Providing opportunities to develop metacognition						
		Encouraging self-regulation						
		Encouraging creativity						
Summary								